

GERMANY AND TURKESTANIS
DURING THE COURSE OF THE WORLD WAR II
(1941-1945)

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the debates about the nationalities issue in the Soviet Union with a special emphasis on the situation of the peoples living in the Soviet Central Asia during the World War II. The thesis traces the history of the Soviet Central Asia on the eve of the World War II and the patterns of behavior of the Turkestani soldiers in the Soviet Army during the war. This study also looks upon Hitler Germany and National Socialist movement within a framework of the German change of attitude towards the Asiatic and Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union before and during the World War II. Finally, it tries to find an answer to the question, why the Turkestani Muslim soldiers fought under German ranks and to which degree this contributed to the nationalism of the Central Asian peoples.

Keywords: Central Asia during the World War II, Nationalities issue in the Soviet Union.

ÖZET

İKİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI SIRASINDA ALMANYA VE TÜRKİSTANLILAR (1941-1945)

Sakal, Halil Burak

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Bu çalışma, hususiyetle İkinci Dünya Savaşı esnasında Sovyet Merkezi Asya'sında yaşayan halkların durumuna atıfta bulunarak, Sovyetler Birliği'ndeki milliyetler meselesi tartışmalarına odaklanmaktadır. Tez, Sovyet Merkezi Asya'sının İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın hemen öncesindeki tarihini ve Sovyet Ordusundaki Türkistanlı askerlerin savaş esnasındaki davranış kalıplarını incelemektedir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, Almanların İkinci Dünya Savaşı öncesinde ve sırasında Sovyetler Birliği'nin Asyalı ve Türk halklarına karşı tutum değişikliği çerçevesinde, Hitler Almanyası ve Nazi hareketine de göz atmaktadır. Nihayet çalışma, Türkistanlı Müslüman askerlerin neden Alman saflarında çarpıştığı ve bunun Merkezi Asya halklarının milliyetçiliğine ne derece katkıda bulunduğu sorularına cevap aramaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İkinci Dünya Savaşı esnasında Merkezi Asya, Sovyetler Birliği'nde milliyetler meselesi.

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Without doubt there will be errors, omissions and over-simplifications, for which I take absolute responsibility, as is customary, while hoping that the rest of the material will be enough to stimulate insights and new trains of thought into the Central Asian studies.

Halil Burak Sakal

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Stalin and his regime had been subject to severe criticism both in the Soviet Union and abroad. Leon Trotsky, Lev Borisovich Kamenev and Grigory Yevseevich Zinoviev, leading ideologues and politicians after Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, represented the first serious and public opposition to Stalin. Trotsky was sent into exile in 1929 to Prinkipo (Büyük Ada) to İstanbul. Zinoviev and Kamenev were brought to the “show trials.” Both were executed in 1936. Abroad, the White Russian emigrants and non-Russians, who fled from Russia after the Russian Civil War (1917-1923), formed various groups of opposition to the Soviet regime. European cities such as Warsaw, Berlin, and Paris became the main centers for these groups.

When the World War II broke out, opposition of the émigré White Russian and non-Russian communities became a significant element. As the World War II progressed, some of the Nazi leaders wanted to make use of them. The opposition groups at first hesitated cooperating with Germans. But the rising numbers of the prisoners-of-war at the hands of the German Army convinced them to join the German forces or collaborate with them.

The World War II had a special place in the history of the Soviet Union, as it had in the history of the most of the world. In Soviet historiography and later in Russian historiography, this war was referred as Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voina

(Great Patriotic War). It can be said that the World War II had resulted, to some degree, with the strengthening the unity among the Soviet people and the Stalinist regime thereafter. On the other hand, the regime witnessed an opposition at home and abroad during the war years, which was not seen before and after the World War II.

A part of the discussion on the wartime opposition to the Stalinist regime in the literature has continued in a framework, whether or not the above-mentioned émigré dissidents were traitors. After the outbreak of the Russo-German battles in the World War II, members of the White Russian movement formed a group named Russkoe Osvoboditelnoe Dvijenie (Russian Liberation Movement). The defected former Red Army general Andrey Vlasov became the leader of the movement. The Russian Liberation Movement and Vlasov constituted the core of this ongoing discussion.¹ But the story of the Russian Liberation Movement does not reflect the whole picture. The opposition of the non-Russians and Muslims to Stalin represented a different character.

What was exclusive regarding the Muslims' dissidence and opposition to the regime can be summarized as follows: First, the pressure on religion applied by the state throughout 1920s and 1930s was never assented by the Muslim peoples of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Joseph Stalin loosened the pressure because of the imminent threat from Germany in 1940s, but it did not have a large impact on the masses. Second, the Soviet engineering on the national identities and efforts to create a homo-Sovieticus had different reflections on the

¹ For more detail about Vlasov and Russian Liberation Movement, see Catherine Andreyev, *Vlasov and the Russian Liberation Movement: Soviet Reality and Emigre Theories* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); George Fischer, *Soviet Opposition to Stalin: A Case Study in World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952); Joachim Hoffmann, *Die Tragödie der "Russischen Befreiungsarmee" 1944/45: Wlassow gegen Stalin* (Munich: Herbig Verlag, 2003).

non-Russian peoples than on the Russians in the Union. When the war began, it had not been passed long after the great purges against the Muslim intelligentsia who pioneered the sense of being a nation among the Turkic peoples. Third, the shadow of the famous *Basmacı*² movement was still visible in Central Asia just before the World War II. The last of the *Basmacı*s Cüneyt Han died in Afghanistan in 1938. Finally, the status of the Turkestan in the eyes of the Russian governments had been different from the time it had been conquered by the Tsarist armies. The policy applied there by the Russian governments was colonialism of a special sort, unlike other non-Russian parts of the empire. The motives of the conquest of the Turkestan were primarily strategic, then economic and political.

During the World War II, in the course of the battles between the Soviet Union and Germany (1941-1945), millions of soldiers of the Red Army fell at the hands of the Germans as prisoners-of-war (POWs).³ Later, nearly one million Soviet citizens, conscripted from these POWs, fought on the German side against the Soviet Union.⁴

² The *Basmacı* (in Russian: Basmachestvo) movement was an uprising started in 1916 during the World War I in Central Asia against the Tsarist regime and Bolshevik rule thereafter. *Basmacı* was the name given to the rebels by the Russians, meaning "raider." Enver Pasha, the leader of the Young Turk movement in the Ottoman Empire led the movement from October 1921 to August 1922.

³ There are many different figures on the numbers of the Soviet prisoners-of-war. According to George Fischer, prior to November 1941, total amount of the Soviet prisoners-of-war was 2,053,000. However, Rosenberg speaks of 3,600,000 men in his letter. See, Fischer, p. 44. Alexander Dallin gives a number of 3,355,000 for the year 1941, 1,653,000 for the year 1942. Dallin's data is based on the OKW/Allgemeines Wehrmachtsamt (General Armed Forces Department of the OKW). See, Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (New York: Palgrave, 1981), p. 427. The data by the Generalquartiermeister des Heeres (Quartermaster General of the Land Army) points to 3,350,639 Soviet soldiers as prisoners-of-war until December 20, 1941 (including also dead, fugitive and released). Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978), p. 356.

⁴ Joachim Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen 1941-1943* (Freiburg: Verlag Rombach Freiburg, 1986), p. 11; Gerhard von Mende, "Erfahrungen mit Ostfreiwilligen in der deutschen Wehrmacht während des zweiten Weltkrieges," *Vielvölkerheere und Koalitionskriege* (Darmstadt: C.W. Leske Verlag, 1952), p. 23. Fischer gives the total amount of the Soviet citizens as nearly half a million. See, Fischer, p. 45.

The World War II was, in every respect, a total war. Furthermore, the clash of two ideologies of the time, Bolshevism in the Soviet Union and National Socialism in Germany, had enormous and irreversible effects on the peoples, which deserves a detailed examination. Both Soviet Union and Germany had authoritarian regimes with similar oppressive control methods. Also, both had expansionist aims with the immediate result of the partition of Poland between the two before the beginning of the German attack on the Soviet Union. The Russo-German battles in the World War II were not only a clash of ideologies, but also of propaganda and manipulation, as well as a bloody clash of two huge land armies of the world.

On the state-level, in both Germany and the Soviet Union, the official state ideology and reality were in serious conflict. On German side, Hitler and Nazi Party's ideology was designed on anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik politics. On the nationality question, Hitler's views were obvious: German blood, and occasionally the "Nordic blood," without doubt, ranked on top of the "hierarchy of races," while the others were followed by it. What is more, this official ideology was made public without hesitation, since the Nazi ideologues found it coherent and rational. In some of the practices of this theory, however, as will be discussed in this study, things developed slightly different than the ideology.

Opposite to any expectations, in the course of war, Nazis developed an interesting policy towards the non-Germans, who were supposed to be ranked last in the Nazi "hierarchy of races." In the instance of the creation of the first non-German units in the German Army and Schutzstaffeln (Protective Echelon, in short SS), German treatment of these people reflected some diversions from the theory. This became obvious in the German attitude towards the Asiatic peoples, who ranked last in the hierarchy with the Jews. Besides, on many occasions, the Asiatic

peoples, including also the Central Asians, perceived the Nazi ideology as being friendly and welcomed Germans as “liberators” from the Russian and Bolshevik yoke. Again, German propaganda was an enormous element in this situation.

On the other hand, Stalinist ideology did the opposite what the Nazis did on nationality issue. The Bolshevik publications of pre- and after 1917 had envisaged the self-determination of all minorities, living within the borders of Russia. This emerged as an indicator of the pragmatic politics of the Bolsheviks. Here, again the politics and practice were incongruous. Especially after Joseph Stalin had consolidated his power, all religious and ethnic minorities faced a totally different attitude than they were promised during the Russian Civil War. The “ordinary people,” the peasants, constituting the majority of the Soviet population, were not able to evaluate the Bolshevik ideology or politics, with which they were not much familiar. Thus, they definitely evaluated the practice.

The World War II was especially important for the Turkic and Muslim peoples of the USSR. It can be said that these people fought a different war from those of the Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union. First of all, as made open by the Nazis, the Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union, namely Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians were seen as direct targets of the Nazis and German invasion physically. Secondly, even then, many Slavic Soviet POWs at the German hands had preferred to fight a war under the German Army and in the SS uniform against the Soviets. However, for the Turkic and Muslim peoples, Soviet (i.e. Russian) oppression (and before this, the Tsarist regime) had represented the imminent threat. That was probably why they had taken active part in the formation of the Waffen-SS and also why they could not have any better relations with the Slavic members in the SS

uniform. And all these happened under dense propaganda from both Soviet and Nazi regimes.

This study focuses on the problem of identities in the USSR and politics behind the Turkestani Waffen-SS formations. It could be rather called as a modest attempt to understand through which motivations the Turkestanis had accepted to fight on the side of another oppressive nation and how the members of this “lower ranking peoples” were welcomed by the Germans to fight on their side. This study mainly focuses on the question of the interrelationship between the joining of the Turkestanis to German Armies to fight against the Soviet State and Soviet policies towards Turkestanis before the war. Besides, this study tries to find a convincing answer to the questions, what were the main cultural and historical motivations of the Turkestanis for their opposition to the state and to what degree the opposition of the Turkestani peoples differed from the one of those living in the rest of the Soviet Union.

In order to explain and understand all these, a literature review of the sources written in German, English, Russian and Turkish languages on the history of the Turkestani armed formations in the German Army will be used. Since very few direct historical sources appeared on the issue, some published and unpublished archival resources regarding the German military activities, memoirs of the German, Turkish, British officers, politicians and diplomats, as well as many Turkic POWs and émigré leaders are employed throughout the study.

CHAPTER II

THE ERA OF REVOLUTIONS IN RUSSIA AND TURKESTAN

The Soviet Union entered the World War II with the Bolshevik party at power. The party and state authority strengthened further by Stalin and Stalinist policies have been important elements on the “nationalities problem” in the USSR. A historical background of how and under which circumstances Bolsheviks took power in Russia and in Turkestan is necessary for understanding the situation of Turkic peoples in Russia on the eve of the World War II.

2.1 Politics in Russia before the Era of Revolutions

Roots of the Bolshevik takeover of government in 1917 dated back to late nineteenth century. The first political party founded in 1898 in Russia by Plekhanov was the Social-Democratic Labor Party, with the proletariat as the targeted class. This party was divided in 1903 forming the Bolshevik and Menshevik branches. The leadership of the Bolshevik party was taken over by Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, or Lenin.

Founded in 1901, the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) sought the support of peasants. They used various instruments, including terror as a means of propaganda in order to undermine the authority of the Tsar and to awaken a popular uprising against the regime. Another political group was Constitutional Democrats, or

Kadets. They favored constitutional monarchy, which would ensure the representation of the democratic rights of the people in the parliament.

2.1.1 The February Revolution

The events that began on February 23, 1917⁵ resulted with the abdication of the Tsar and re-opening of the Russian parliament, Duma,⁶ as the only authority for representation and government of the people in Russia. The Vremennoye Pravitelstvo Rossii (Russian Provisional Government) was founded under Georgy Lvov. Following the events of July 1917, Alexander Kerensky government was founded until the Bolshevik takeover in October.

During the World War I, Russia was experiencing one of the most turbulent times in her political history. Centuries-long Tsarist government was overthrown under an atmosphere of military, social, economic and political crisis. The democratic revolution of February 1917 did not last long and the Bolshevik party took over the government on October 25, 1917.⁷

2.1.2 The Bolshevik Takeover

At first, the Bolshevik takeover was perceived as being temporary. The aide-de-camp of Alexander Kerensky, the Chairman of the Russian Provisional Government, was reporting to the US-Ambassador to Russia, David Rowland Francis, that this movement would be “liquidated” within five days. He recommended the US-government not to recognize the new Soviet government.⁸

⁵ The “February Revolution” in 1917 took place on March 1917. This date corresponded to February 1917 according to the Julian calendar. The “October Revolution” was an event in November 1917. To avoid confusion, the old style Julian calendar will be used in this chapter exclusively.

⁶ Russian parliament Duma was first opened in 1905.

⁷ This date corresponded to November 7, 1917 according to the Gregorian calendar. For detailed information on Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1907, see Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1990).

⁸ “The Ambassador in Russia (Francis) to the US Secretary of State,” on November 7, 1917, 5 p.m.,

For a long time, the whereabouts of Kerensky were unknown, while all ministers, except him, were arrested on October 25. Petrogradskiy soviet rabochih i soldatskih deputatov (Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies) sent bulletins throughout Russia that "Soviet was in control and the government disposed."⁹

The Bolsheviks got their main support from the soldiers, whom they promised ending to the ongoing war. Apart from the soldiers, railroad workers and women supported them at very early crucial stages. On the other hand, they sought "ethnic support" from some of the non-Russian peoples by using the famous slogan of that time, the "self-determination."¹⁰

After the bloody Civil War (1917-1923), Bolsheviks consolidated their power and liquidated all other political parties and opposition groups. Figures to organize new political movements were labeled as revisionists or class enemies. Thus, the only opposition parties could be established by the émigrés abroad. It is worth mentioning here that opposition groups close to Nazi ideology, Konstantin Rodzaevski's "Russian Fascist Party," founded in 1931 and based in Manchukuo, and Anastasy Vosyatsky's "Russian Fascist Organization," founded in 1933 and tried to be merged with the Russian Fascist Party in 1934, proved ineffective.¹¹ The politics in the USSR was difficult for the non-Russians as well. Like the Russian

File No. 861.00/632, the Avalon Project. See <http://avalon.law.yale.edu>, accessed on November 23, 2009.

⁹ "The Ambassador in Russia (Francis) to the Secretary of State," on November 8, 1917, 5 p.m., File No. 861.00/635; "The Ambassador in Russia (Francis) to the Secretary of State," on November 10, 1917, 11 p.m., the Avalon Project. There was an uncertainty prevailed for days in Russia. It is understood that even the US-Ambassador did not know where Lenin and Trotsky were. See, "The Ambassador in Russia (Francis) to the Secretary of State," on November 9, 1917, 5 p.m., File No. 861.00/068, the Avalon Project.

¹⁰ Terry Martin, "An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism," in Roland Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, eds., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 68.

¹¹ Werner Brockdorff, *Kollaboration oder Widerstand in den Besetzten Ländern* (Munich: Verlag Welsermühl, 1968), p. 186.

ones, some of the non-Russian politicians and intellectuals were liquidated, while some others emigrated and continued their opposition abroad.

2.2 The Russian Central Asia

2.2.1 Turkestan before the Revolution

“Nothing can be more natural than the expansion of the Russian Empire over the mid-latitude plains east of Caspian.” So wrote one traveler into Turkestan just before the 1905 revolution. Except the desert, there were no real topographical barriers to hinder the Russian progress.¹² The Imperial Russia’s invasion of Central Asia was finalized in 1884 with the capture of the city Merv. Before that, Tashkent surrendered in 1865; the Bukharan Emirate and the Khivan Khanate were defeated in 1868 and 1873, while Kokand Khanate liquidated in 1876.¹³

The methods of empire-building of the Russian Empire worked as follows: the officials of the Tsar contacted the nobility of the newly acquired land and forced them to cooperate with the Tsarist government. In Central Asia, this method was applied only partially. Russia did not try to integrate the nomadic and peasant populations. This helped the preservation of the “national and ethnic identities.”¹⁴ Further, as mentioned shortly in the introduction chapter, the conquest of Central Asia had been a typical colonial expansion. It was set under military administration, was supposed to supply Russia for raw materials, while being a market for the final

¹² W. M. Davis, “A Summer in Turkestan,” *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* (Vol. 36, No. 4 (1904)), p. 217.

¹³ Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 199-201.

¹⁴ Roland Grigor Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” in Suny and Martin, p. 41.

products of the Russian industry.¹⁵ The words of the Russian Statesman, Lobanov Rostovsky represented a good example reflecting the official view of the imperial Russia on Turkestan. He stated that “[i]t has remained an alien country governed by Russia and is much more a field for Russian enterprise and culture than for Russian colonization proper.”¹⁶

As will be discussed below, the definitions and concepts of nation in the minds of the Turkestani intellectuals varied from time to time. The educated class in Turkestan was split into two: some of them, the kadimists,¹⁷ pursued the way of Islam and rejected the new methods in education, while others believed the European values and thoughts.¹⁸ In order to understand the Turkestani intelligentsia, a short historical background of the cedid movement is necessary.

2.2.2 Politics in Central Asia and the Cedid Movement

The cedid movement, whose name stems from the *usul-u cedid* (new method) schools, first of which was founded by Münevver Qari in 1901. These schools were advocated by İsmail Bey Gaspıralı and had a significant role in the formation and motivation of the Turkestani intellectuals. In these schools, Turkic languages were used instead of Arabic as means of education. Mathematics, geography and history were taught as well.¹⁹ The new method schools helped emergence of a new trend among the Turkic intelligentsia reaching beyond

¹⁵ Soucek, pp. 200-203.

¹⁶ Lobanov Rostovsky, “The Soviet Muslim Republics in Central Asia,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (Vol. 7, No. 4 (Jul., 1928)), p. 242.

¹⁷ Kadimists’ name was derived from the originally Arabic word *kadim*, meaning “ancient, old.” They were mainly against the reform movements in the society and blamed cedids as being infidels. See, A. Ahat Andican, *Turkestan Struggle Abroad: From Jadidism to Independence* (Haarlem: Sota, 2007), p. 25.

¹⁸ Suny, p. 52.

¹⁹ Andican, *Turkestan Struggle Abroad*, p. 25.

education. Consequently, cedidism rose as a movement for cultural reform in the Turkic world.²⁰

After the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Tsar Nicholas II had to permit elections to be held in Russia. This resulted with a relatively more liberal political atmosphere, in which Turkestani nationalists established political bodies in Central Asia and organized conferences across Russia. Muslim and Turkic deputies supported some of the Russian parties in Duma, which they considered to be closer to their views. Also, some of them worked directly in the Russian Kadet party.²¹

Few numbers of Turkestanis received modern education at the schools founded by Russians. Besides, cedids provided modern schooling in Turkestan. These cedids were either from the “older parts of the Russian Empire” such as Kazan, or were educated in the Russian institutions.²² Some members of the cedit movement went to the Ottoman Empire’s capital,²³ where they got familiar with nationalistic ideas “in forms of pan-Islamism or pan-Turkism.”²⁴

Intellectuals such as Mahmud Hoca Behbudi and Abdurrauf Fitrat were active in Bukhara despite the suppression of the Bukharan Emir on the cedit movement. They thought that the way to enlightenment passes through the struggle against Tsarist imperialism and suppression, as well as religious fanaticism.²⁵

²⁰ Adeeb Khalid, “Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan,” *Slavic Review* (Vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer, 1996)), pp. 274-275.

²¹ A. Ahat Andican, *Cedidizm'den Bağımsızlığa Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi* (İstanbul: Emre, 2003), p. 29 (will be cited as *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi* hereafter).

²² İsmail Bey Gaspiralı (1851-1914), a Crimean Tatar, led the *usul-u cedit* (new method) movement in the modern schooling in Central Asia. Soucek, p. 206.

²³ Among them were Abdurrauf Fitrat, Osman Hoca, Gülceli Abdülaziz and Sadık Aşuroğlu. They arrived in 1909 to Turkey and established relations with Young Turks. See, Andican, *Turkestan Struggle Abroad*, pp. 27-28.

²⁴ Soucek, p. 206.

²⁵ Andican, *Turkestan Struggle Abroad*, p. 27.

2.2.3 Revolt in Central Asia

During the World War I, the situation was worsened for the population of Central Asia because of the taxes imposed on them and forced labor. The discontent heightened in 1916. On June 25, the Tsar ordered all Turkestanian males between the ages of nineteen and forty three to be conscripted to the army.²⁶ The Turkestanian population was not seen as eligible for the military service before.²⁷ Now, the Turkestanians were to be forced to work at the construction battalions of the Russian Army fighting against the Muslim Ottoman Empire.

Further, the government intervened into the cotton production in Turkestan by fixing the price of this commodity.²⁸ Turkestan had been dependent on Russia for foodstuff since its colonization. Food prices increased steadily in 1917. In the same year, with the contribution of unfavorable weather conditions, famine started. Russia stopped all the grain transports to Turkestan.²⁹

The events, which broke out in the Uzbek city Hojend on July 4, 1916, spread shortly and turned into a widespread revolt. Harshest measures were taken by the government to suppress the events, perishing thousands of people, burning entire villages and causing many Muslims to flee to China.³⁰ In Semireche, the revolt was led by the Kazaks, while in Fergana *Basmacı* movement intervened into the conflict.³¹

²⁶ Johannes Benzing, "Das turkestanische Volk im Kampf um seine Selbständigkeit," *Die Welt des Islams* (vol. 19 (1937)), pp. 117-119.

²⁷ Soucek, p. 209; Martha B. Olcott, "The Basmachi or Freeman's Revolt in Turkestan 1918-24," *Soviet Studies* (Vol. 33, No. 3 (Jul., 1981)), p. 353.

²⁸ Marco Buttino, "Study of the Economic Crisis and Depopulation in Turkestan, 1917-1920" *Central Asian Survey* (Vol.9, No.4, 1990), p. 60.

²⁹ Buttino, p. 61.

³⁰ Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, "The Fall of the Czarist Empire," in *Central Asia: 130 Years of Russian Dominance, A Historical Overview*, Third Edition (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 210-213

³¹ Buttino, p. 61.

According to historian d'Encausse, during the events, Kazaks' and Kirgizs' problem was mainly "land," while for Uzbeks, "recognition of equal rights" was more important. Prominent figures of the turbulent times were, in Turkestan guberniia Mahmud Hoca Behbudi and Münevver Qari, in Kazakstan Tınışbay and Baytursun.³²

2.2.4 Political Activities of the Turkestanis from February to October 1917

The abolishment of the Tsarist monarchy in February 1917 caused a dual-power in Tashkent, as it had been in Petrograd. The Gubernator of Turkestan at that time was Kropotkin. He announced full loyalty to Kerensky government in Petrograd, which abolished the Tsarist governmental system in Turkestan in March 1917.³³ Kropotkin was not alone on the political scene in Turkestan: there was the Turkestan Committee, composed of former Tsarist officers and supporters (five Russians, and four Muslims) of Provisional Government against the Tashkent Soviet of Soldiers', Workers' and Peasants' Deputies (Tashkent Soviet). Feyzullah Hocayev and Münevver Qari were members of this body.³⁴

Turkestan Committee was appointed by the Provisional Government. In practice, this body had no political power. The actual power was at the hands of the Tashkent Soviet. It was dominated by SRs and Mensheviks. Bolsheviks had no separate organization in Tashkent until December 1917. They had a distinct faction in the Tashkent Soviet only.

Turkestanis found the chance to establish their national and religious bodies, publish their own journals for a short while after the abolishment of the Tsarist

³² d'Encausse, pp. 212-213.

³³ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 39.

³⁴ Alexander G. Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan 1917 – 1921* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 9-10.

regime in February 1917.³⁵ In April 1917, the Muslim group in Russian Duma held a special conference, deciding to call for an All-Russian Muslim Congress in Moscow. Muslims in Russia held regional conferences and elected their deputies to be sent to Moscow.³⁶ The Congress convened on May 1, 1917 in Moscow.

On the “nationality question,” two groups emerged among the Muslims of Russia. One group advocated the integrity of the Empire and favored cultural autonomy. Volga Tatars dominated this group. Another group led by Mehmed Emin Resulzade favored federalism and national self-determination. The Congress voted for the latter.³⁷

The Congress also elected a Milli Merkezi *Şura* (National Central Council). It was known among the people as the Milli Merkez (National Center), Mustafa Çokay (January 1890- December 1941) being its chairman.³⁸ The aim of the Milli Merkez was to represent Muslims in the capital and prepare proposals, which appeared as the result of the Congress. These proposals were to be presented to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly.³⁹ Conservatives of Turkestan, who thought that they were not represented in Milli Merkez, founded in June 1917 the Ulema Cemiyeti (Society of Ulema) under the leadership of Şir Ali Lapin.⁴⁰ By the summer of 1917, the Turkestan Committee, the Tashkent Soviet, the Milli Merkez, and the Ulema Cemiyeti were on the scene for the bid of power in Turkestan.

Milli Merkez tried to establish a program for the formation of an autonomous Turkestan as part of the Russian Democratic Republic, which was accepted in September 1917 in Tashkent. But the power struggle in this city

³⁵ Baymirza Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens* (Köln: Studienverlag, 1980), p. 95.

³⁶ Pipes, p. 76.

³⁷ Pipes, pp. 77-78.

³⁸ Ertürk, “Mustafa Coqaj,” *Millij Türkistan* (year 2(5), January 15, 1950, vol 65), p. 12.

³⁹ Pipes, pp. 77-78.

⁴⁰ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 40.

between the Turkestan Committee and the Tashkent Soviet led to the establishment of the military dictatorship of General Korovichenko. He was sent to Turkestan with punitive troops from Petrograd.⁴¹ On November 19, 1917 a Soviet Commissariat, composed of thirty six Russian commissars, was established in Tashkent.⁴²

2.2.5 The Civil War in Turkestan

In the autumn of 1917, Orenburg was surrounded by the Cossack military forces loyal to the Tsar, blocking communication and transport between European Russia and Turkestan. Semireche was also in control of the Cossacks for a while. Fergana Valley was the scene of riots and disorders. The tension between Russian settlers and native population rose sharply. The natives sought support from *Basmacis*.⁴³ The famine of 1917 followed by an epidemic in Turkestan made the situation worse. Furthermore, Orenburg blockade hindered food transportation to Turkestan.⁴⁴ From 1919 on, the Russian revolutionaries in Turkestan had the monopoly over the food distribution in the region. Later, in search for allies against the Whites, they had to accept to share power with the natives during the conflict.⁴⁵

The situation in Bukhara was in favor of the Emir, since his independence was recognized de facto by the Tashkent Soviet. The cedids, who were hopeful for reforms in Bukhara after the February revolution, were seen as “traitors to Islam”

⁴¹ Nadira A. Abdurrakhimova, “The Colonial System of Power in Turkistan,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Vol. 34, No. 2, Special Issue: Nationalism, 2002), pp. 257-258.

⁴² Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens*, p. 95.

⁴³ Adeeb Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” in Suny and Martin, p. 147.

⁴⁴ Agrarian lands in Turkestan deteriorated by half, while livestock decreased by 75 per cent. The population of Central Asia fell from 7.148.000 to 5.336.500 between 1915 and 1920. See, Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 54; Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” p. 148.

⁴⁵ Buttino, p. 63.

by the Emir. A clash took place between them in April 1917. The Bukharan cedids fled to the Russian enclave Kagan and turned the “Young Bukharan” group into a political party. They saw that the Emir could not realize the reforms they demanded, so they came closer to the Soviets.⁴⁶ Some cedids choose to side with the Bolsheviks, who made public the secret treaties signed by the Tsarist Empire at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and whose rhetoric was anti-imperialistic.⁴⁷

The Narodniy kommissariat po delam natsionalnostei (People’s Commissariat for Nationality Affairs) sent a delegation in February 1918 to Turkestan. The mission became successful in terms of awakening interest in the Soviet government. Cedids became members of the Bolshevik party organs in Central Asia, which adopted new names. For instance, the “Samarkand Labor Union” became “Muslim Soviet of Workers’ and Peasants’ Deputies.”⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the Soviet troops first marched on Kokand in February 1918, where an autonomous national republic was proclaimed in December 1917 by Mustafa Çokay, then on Bukhara in March 1918.⁴⁹ They had to withdraw from Bukhara after a short while, recognizing the sovereignty rights of Bukhara. In May 1918, Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was proclaimed under Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.⁵⁰ The cedids helped the Red Army, when it attacked on Khiva and Bukhara in 1920.

⁴⁶ Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” pp. 147-149.

⁴⁷ Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” pp. 149-153.

⁴⁸ The commission was composed of P.A. Kobozev, Y. İbrahimov and Arif Klevleev. See, Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” pp. 154-155.

⁴⁹ Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens*, p. 96.

⁵⁰ Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens*, pp. 96-97.

At the “Fifth Regional Conference” of the Communist Party of Turkestan, the name of the newly founded “Turkestan Republic” became “Turk Republic,” while the name of the Party was changed to “Communist Party of the Turkic Peoples.”⁵¹ For the cedids, the lands where the Chagatai language was spoken, constituted the historical homeland of the Turkic peoples, who should be united as a single political entity. After a while, however, the Chagatai was replaced by “Uzbek.” Some Muslim intellectuals claimed that the language was “Uzbek language,” while the population of Turkestan was “Uzbek” as a whole. Therefore, the Uzbek nationalism became widespread and dominated all others, long before the “official emergence” of the Uzbek nation as a result of the national territorial delimitation in 1924.⁵²

While in early 1920s, the cedids wrote in newspapers and welcomed the common awareness of “Turkestan nationalism,” the Soviet authorities were trying to divide the nation into parts, which could be “defined and demarcated.”⁵³ All the discussions ended with the national territorial delimitation of Turkestan, or *razmezhevanie* in 1924. Uzbek nationalists played a great role in this process.⁵⁴ In September, People’s Republic of Khorezm and Bukhara were abolished, which were followed by the Turkestan ASSR in October 1924.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” p. 155.

⁵² Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” p. 158.

⁵³ Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” p. 159.

⁵⁴ Hasan Ali Karasar, “The Partition of Khorezm and the Positions of Turkestanis on *Razmezhevanie*,” *Europe-Asia Studies* (Vol. 60, No. 7, September 2008), p. 1250.

⁵⁵ Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens*, p. 99.

2.2.6 The Nationalities Question and Bolshevik Ideology

The nationalities issue and its perception by the political groups had crucial effects on the political choices of the non-Russians in the Soviet Union. The political parties in Russia had different positions on the issue. For instance, the SRs were favoring a federative system, in which rights were to be given to all the nationalities of the Empire. They supported the self-determination of all nations. After a while they changed their view and argued that for each region and nation, a separate solution should be found. Kadet Party was against the federal structure. They favored a fully integrated Russia. But the nations could preserve their cultural and educational rights within the state.⁵⁶

Before taking power in 1917, Bolshevik party leader Lenin gave the definition of its most famous slogan, the “right of self determination” by stating that it meant “the political separation of the ... nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent state.”⁵⁷ He pursued a policy against “separation” from the Soviet Union. He stated that the Bolsheviks “... do not at all want the peasant in Khiva to live under the Khan of Khiva. By developing [the] revolution, [they] shall influence the oppressed masses.”⁵⁸

The nations, according to Lenin, which were “not able” to get separated from Russia, should not given any cultural rights, federalism, or autonomy. The only choice for a nation in Russia was being completely independent and establishing a new state.⁵⁹ Federalism and “extraterritorial cultural autonomy”

⁵⁶ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 31; Veli Kayyum Han, “Ruslar Blan Birga İslamaq Mumkinmi?” *Millij Türkistan* (Year 2(6), March 1951, vol. 70/71 A), pp. 3-5.

⁵⁷ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 20 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), p. 397.

⁵⁸ Lenin, “Speech on the National Question” in *Collected Works*, *The Revolution of 1917: From the March Revolution to the July Days*, vol. 20, p. 314.

⁵⁹ Pipes, p. 43.

would therefore be not accepted.⁶⁰ Lenin repeatedly stated that “Marxists [were] ... opposed to federation and decentralization, for the simple reason that capitalism requires for its development the largest and most centralized possible states.”⁶¹ Educational or cultural autonomy, according to Lenin would lead to segregation and growth of chauvinism, whereas they were trying to unite all the proletariat of the oppressed nations.⁶²

The Bolsheviks’ views on the nationalities issue were not homogenous. Lenin’s discussions with Nikolai Bukharin and Georgii Piatakov at the “Eighth Party Congress” in March 1919 reflected this point. According to Piatakov, only class was relevant, not the self-determination right of the nations. Bukharin’s views were similar: he thought that the “national will” was “fictitious.”⁶³ Lenin answered them stating if “national identity was given proper respect,” the “politically dominant social identity” would become class.⁶⁴

The communists, Lenin thought, “inherited the psychology of Great Power chauvinism” of the imperial regime. Lenin denounced this attitude in 1922, and blamed Stalin, Dzerzhinsky and Ordzhonikidze of being “chauvinists.” He openly put that the nationalism of the “oppressor” and the “oppressed” should be distinguished from each other.⁶⁵ Stalin supported Lenin’s attitude until December 1932. On the other hand, Lenin thought that the “decolonization” in Russia was inevitable. Lenin and Bolsheviks aimed to manage this process, while preserving the centrality and “territorial integrity of the old Russian Empire” in a socialist

⁶⁰ Pipes, p. 44.

⁶¹ Lenin, “Critical Remarks on the National Question,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 20, p. 45.

⁶² Lenin, “On the Question of National Policy,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 20, p. 224.

⁶³ Martin, p. 68.

⁶⁴ Martin, p. 68.

⁶⁵ Martin, p. 71.

manner.⁶⁶ When Bolsheviks took government, they did not have a proper “nationalities policy.”⁶⁷ The only instrument Bolsheviks had in hand was their reference to the “self-determination” rights of the nations.⁶⁸

Though Bolsheviks tried to “intervene” as early as 1918 in the government of Central Asia, their power could not reach to Turkestan up until 1920.⁶⁹ By 1919, however, Turkestan Nationalities Commissariat had branches for dealing with the nationalities questions of Uzbek, Kirgiz, Tadjik, Dungan, Russian, Armenian and Jewish peoples. Definitions of Kara Kirgiz and Kaisak Kirgiz were made by then, which led to the establishment of Kirgizstan and Kazakstan as separate political domains within the USSR.⁷⁰

Until the end of the Civil War in Russia, the nationalities issue was debated at the Bolshevik party conferences. In April 1923, at the Twelfth Party Congress and in June the same year, at the Central Committee Conference on Nationalities Policy, two decisions were taken. These became the basic principles of the nationality policy of the Bolshevik party. The issue had no more been discussed openly after that. According to these, national languages and national elites were to be encouraged “in national territories.”⁷¹ Furthermore, symbolic indicators of identity, such as dressing, folklore, art and history of each of the nations were either invented or re-emerged by the Soviet Union.⁷²

⁶⁶ Martin, p. 67.

⁶⁷ Martin, p. 67.

⁶⁸ Martin, pp. 67-68.

⁶⁹ Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism 1917-1920,” p. 147.

⁷⁰ Karasar, p. 1250.

⁷¹ Martin, p. 73.

⁷² Martin, p. 74; Douglas Northrop, “Nationalizing Backwardness: Gender, Empire, and Uzbek Identity,” in Suny and Martin, pp. 191-122.

2.2.7 The Creation of Nations in Central Asia

Until 1924, there existed Turkestan ASSR, Kirghiz (read Kazak) ASSR, the People's Soviet Republic of Bukhara and the People's Soviet Republic of Khorezm (Khiva) in Central Asia. In 1924, in cooperation with the local Bolshevik leaders, the Soviet government drew new political boundaries of Central Asia. This was named *razmezhevanie* (delimitation).⁷³

Previously, the drawing of the boundaries defining a greater Turkestan, it is understood, was the project of not only some of the local Bolsheviks such as Turar Ryskulov, but also the Turkestani nationalist Mustafa Çokay and the national communist Mir Said Sultan Galiyev.⁷⁴ Bolshevik Turar Ryskulov had also planned to demarcate Turkestan, establishing a united Turkestan under the name of Turk-Republic.⁷⁵ Neither of these plans was turned into reality. The plan of Feyzullah Hocayev, a former Young Bukharan, however, gained support from the Soviet government, which foresaw to divide the region in accordance with linguistic differences.⁷⁶

With the *razmezhevanie*, six nations in the region were created. Bolsheviks then started to “define” these newly created nations “through difference” from each other.⁷⁷ First, language was employed. The Persian-speaking Tajik population was easy to differentiate from the remaining of the Turkic population. Then, minor cultural differences and variations in daily life brought to foreground by the

⁷³ Karasar, pp. 1247-1248.

⁷⁴ Galiyev was purged by Stalin in 1923, accusing him of being pan-Islamist and pan-Turkist. See, Karasar, p. 1249.

⁷⁵ Ryskulov was the chairman of the Musbyuro (Muslim Bureau) of the Central Committee and Communist Party of the Turkestan ASSR. He first proposed the change of the name Turkestan ASSR to Turk-Republic in January 1920, at the Third Congress of the Musbyuro. Karasar, p. 1249.

⁷⁶ Karasar, p. 1249.

⁷⁷ Northrop, p. 199.

Bolsheviks. According to Northrop, the Turkestani women were the main subject of all the newly made definitions.⁷⁸ Alphabet and literature of the “new” Turkestani nations were differentiated as well, accompanied with systematic anthropological and biomedical studies. The sources of all these definitions went back before the *razmezhevanie*, to the year 1921.⁷⁹

In March 1924, following the orders of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, Khorezm was sub-divided into autonomous regions. At the same time, the Fifth All-Khorezmian Congress decided the joining of the “Turkmen, Uzbek and Karakalpak-Kazak people” of the Khorezm Republic to the “newly created republics and regions.”⁸⁰

Feyzullah Hocayev was included in this process of demarcation, since he aimed to gain the “best and most delicious” regions in Central Asia, in the newly established Uzbekistan. This had been at the expense of the two oldest Muslim states in the region, Bukhara and Khorezm.⁸¹ This reflects the last stage of the change of the identity of the Turkestani intelligentsia from Muslim to Uzbek.

2.3 Bolshevik Culture Policies in Central Asia

One of the most important reasons why Central Asian cedids cooperated with the Bolsheviks was that Bolsheviks favored cultural development and enlightenment in the backward regions of Russia. This was what exactly cedids were trying to realize.

⁷⁸ Northrop, pp. 199-200.

⁷⁹ Northrop, pp. 201-203; Karasar, p. 1251.

⁸⁰ Karasar, p. 1254.

⁸¹ Karasar, p. 1254-1255.

From 1921 on, modern primary schools were founded in Central Asia. These schools used Arabic alphabet as the means of instruction. Essentially, Bolsheviks could not take control of the education in Central Asia until 1924.⁸² The schools prepared their curriculum and programs individually.⁸³ The Arabic alphabet was used in Central Asia until 1928-1929, when Latin was introduced.⁸⁴

At the times of the “great purges” in 1937, nearly all of the national cadres of the Muslim intelligentsia, who had ceded past, were purged. This precisely ended the potential nationalist opposition to the regime. Until 1937, the majority of the Bureau Secretaries of the Party Committee at the rayon level and city level (raykoms and gorkoms, respectively) were Turkestanis. They became minority after the 1937 purges of Stalin.⁸⁵

After March 1938, Soviet Narodnykh Kommissarov (Council of the People’s Commissars) and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party decreed Russian language to be compulsory at the primary schools.⁸⁶ Again after this date, all the textbooks began to be written by the center, which were prepared by the Union Republics previously. A comprehensive Russian history was taught in primary schools, while the history of Central Asia only little mentioned in it.⁸⁷

The schools built over the *usul-u cedid* schools after the revolution continued education until being closed in early 1930s. The publications, such as *Yas Turkistan* journal, were popular among the politically active students in large cities,

⁸² Interview with a Central Asian, who worked at the Pedagogical Institute in the Soviet Union, See, Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 252, The Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (Harvard Project hereafter), <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/index.html>, accessed on December 22, 2009, p. 4.

⁸³ Schedule B / Vol. 1, Case 77, The Harvard Project, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Schedule B / Vol. 1, Case 77, The Harvard Project, p. 7.

⁸⁵ Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 252, The Harvard Project, p. 17.

⁸⁶ Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 252, The Harvard Project, p. 6.

⁸⁷ Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 252, The Harvard Project, p. 9.

like Tashkent. This journal became the target of Stalin on the Sixteenth Party Congress of the All-Union Communist Party held during 26 June - 13 July 1930 in Moscow.⁸⁸

The Bolshevik ideology was also aiming to “regulate” Islam, as a matter of private lives of the citizens, instead of being in the center of political and social life. In long term, Islam might be abolished completely.⁸⁹

2.4 The Nationalities Issue during the World War II and the Ceditism

According to historian Roland Grigor Suny, Russian colonization in Turkestan was justified by “developmentalism” from the time it had begun. This meant that the colonizer justified its presence there by its claims of modernizing and developing the colony. Suny claims that the Russian Empire “achieved their stated task too well,” that the population of the colony in the USSR “no longer required empire in the way colonizers claimed.”⁹⁰ After a century, the development Suny talks about helped the emergence of a “national” intelligentsia in Turkestan.

The story of the cedit movement reflects, in summary, the emergence of an intellectual class in Turkestan, the exploration of its identity first as being a Muslim, politically inspired by the Ottoman Empire, and then a shift in this identity towards “Turk[ic]” and finally to “Uzbek” through the first quarter of the twentieth century.⁹¹ Especially in the era of revolutions (1905-1917) in Russia, the Muslim intelligentsia found the chance to be politically active. Historian Richard Pipes categorizes them in three main groups in terms of their political views. First was the

⁸⁸ Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 221, The Harvard Project, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁹ Bennigsen, *Islam in Soviet Union*, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁰ Suny, p. 31.

⁹¹ A. Ahat Andican, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Türkiye ve Orta Asya* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2009), pp. 303-304.

rightist religious group, ulema, composed of the orthodox Muslim clergy and relatively wealthier Muslims in Turkestan. They politically favored religious conservatism. In Turkestan, where the religious leaders enjoyed great respect, this rightist group had an important influence. The second group, liberals, lied in the center of the political spectrum. They were westerners, and politically associated with the Russian Kadets. It was the liberals, who led an “All-Russian Muslim Movement” in Russia, which was more or less a reform movement, with the aim of “democratization and secularization” of the Muslims’ life in Russia.⁹² The third group was the leftists. In addition to the westerners’ thoughts and secularism of the liberals, they also embraced socialism. Their type of socialism was the Russian “Socialist Revolutionary” type.⁹³ Indeed, by 1917 most cedids would rally to the autonomist movement. Some of them would support the *cihad* (holy war) for national liberation, with clearly religious tones, until the final extinction of the *Basmacı* movement.⁹⁴

Cedidism is important to understand the background of the nationalities issue emerged in the World War II. The *usul-u cedit* schools had a significant role in the formations and motivations of the Turkestani prisoners-of-war and the so called “Turkestan legion” during the World War II, especially through its leading figure Mustafa Çokay, who was from the cedit tradition. It was the cedit movement that surfaced the nationalism and the debates on the nationalities issues in Central Asia during the revolutionary era.

⁹² Pipes, p. 76.

⁹³ Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism 1917-1923*, revised edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 76.

⁹⁴ Ingeborg Baldauf, “Jadidism in Central Asia within Reformism and Modernism in the Muslim World,” *Die Welt des Islams* (New Series, Vol. 41, Issue 1 (Mar., 2001)), p. 79.

It should be emphasized that during the World War II, the émigré Turkestani nationalists, such as Baymirza Hayit and Veli Kayyum Han defended a single and united Turkestan.⁹⁵ One should understand, along with the changes in the Russian politics, the roots and progress of the reform movement in Turkestan, cecidism, and its definition of its identity well, in order to understand its crucial contribution to the nationality affairs during the World War II.

The issue of alphabet and language of literature of Central Asian peoples were also important, since they would have their reflections on the publications of the Turkestanis in the Waffen-SS years later. These will be discussed in the following chapters in detail.

⁹⁵ See, for example, Baymirza Hayit, “Biznin Istıqlal,” *Millij Türkistan* (November 15, 1942, Vol. 9), pp. 7-12.

CHAPTER III

GERMANY AND THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST RACE IDEOLOGY

The Central Asians in the German Army fought in both German Army and Waffen-SS (Armed SS). However, these two were different bodies with completely distinct backgrounds and organization. It is necessary to remember shortly the emergence of the SS in Germany as a “rival” to the Army and its commanders in order to understand how and under which circumstances the Turkestanis were recruited by Germans.

3.1 The Guards of the National Socialist Party

The active cadres of the National Socialist (Nazi) movement in Germany were the Sturmabteilung (storm department), or in short, SA. The story of the SA went back to early 1920s. During the turbulent times in Germany, when bloody fights between political groups to control the streets were commonplace, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Worker’s Party, NSDAP), organized meetings in beer halls. The group of Nazi Party, which involved in the street clashes named itself as “gymnastics department” and “sports department” of the party. In November 1921, it took the name

Sturmabteilung officially. The SA, led by Hermann Göring, and the NSDAP were outlawed after organizing the unsuccessful coup against Hitler in November 1923.⁹⁶

The Nazi Party was re-organized in February 1925, with the SA integrated into it. From then on, they began wearing the famous brown shirts with swastika. Hitler himself became the leader of the organization in 1929. They marched in the streets, their numbers rose sharply in a few months, reaching to sixty thousand in 1930 in two hundred local associations. In 1931, Hitler nominated Ernst Röhm as the leader of SA. In this year, the number of the members reached to two hundred sixty thousand.⁹⁷ This group of mostly unemployed youth was not loyal to Hitler in person. Besides, they were not disciplined enough to provide the service, which Hitler desired.⁹⁸

Among the physically superior members of the SA, two hundred men were selected as personal bodyguards of Hitler. This group of bodyguards began to be known first as Stabswache (headquarter guards), then Stosstrupp Adolf Hitler (shock troop Adolf Hitler), and finally as Schutzstaffeln (protective echelon), or in short, SS. When Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the number of the members of the SS increased to fifty two thousand men, while SA got three hundred thousand. Heinrich Himmler, appointed by Hitler as the *Reichsführer SS* (Head of the SS), established the Sicherheitsdienst (security service), or SD, as the unofficial security service of the SS in 1931. Later on, the SD became the official intelligence and counterespionage unit of the NSDAP.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Stephanie Traichel, *Der Röhm-Putsch* (Norderstedt: Grin Verlag, 2003), p. 3.

⁹⁷ Traichel, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁸ Gordon Williamson, *Waffen-SS Handbook 1933-1945* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2005), p. 1.

⁹⁹ George H. Stein, *The Waffen-SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War 1939-1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. xxvii.

By February 22, 1933, after the Reichstag fire, fifteen thousand members of the SS and twenty five thousand members of the SA were appointed as auxiliary police forces. Their official task was to help the regular police in Germany. However, unofficially and unlawfully, they were used to crush the anti-Nazi elements in Germany and to manipulate elections. They broke into houses, arrested people and brought them to the Konzentrationslager (concentration camps). The relatively better organized and disciplined SS groups were more “efficient” in this task.¹⁰⁰

When Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the NSDAP was the most well-organized political party in Germany. The SA and the SS were controlling the streets. But it was not sufficient for Hitler. Paul von Hindenburg was still president; the police forces and the Reichswehr (Reich Defense, Wehrmacht after 1935) were not under Nazi control. Hitler’s concerns about his safety were continuing. In case of a possible army coup, he felt himself unprotected.

On March 17, 1933, third time in a ten-year period, Hitler ordered the formation of a personal bodyguard group directly set under his order. Josef “Sepp” Dietrich established a group of conscientiously selected 120 men among the SS. This group would be known as SS Stabswache Berlin (SS Staff Guard Berlin), and become the nucleus of the future Waffen-SS.¹⁰¹

As Hitler’s political power increased, he felt the need of the support of the Wehrmacht (lit. “Defense Force,” German Armed Forces). With the impact of some military commanders, Hitler abolished the SA. Its members were liquidated between

¹⁰⁰ Stein, pp. xxv-2.

¹⁰¹ Williamson, p. 3, Stein, pp. 3-4.

June 30 and July 2, 1934.¹⁰² Meanwhile, on July 20, Hitler elevated the SS “to the standing of an independent organization within the NSDAP.”¹⁰³ The *Reichsführer* SS would be “directly subordinate to the highest *SS Führer*.”¹⁰⁴

3.1.1 Hitler’s Personal Bodyguards

The SS was essentially established to protect Hitler. Until 1932, the Allgemeine SS (General SS) remained as a relatively small and elite branch of the SA organization. Furthermore, the members of the SS were employed part-time and the guards were recruited on a voluntary basis. Hitler needed full-time and physically powerful able bodyguards for exclusive protection.

In September 1933, Hitler officially named his bodyguards Leibstandarte SS “*Adolf Hitler*” (SS Guard Regiment “Adolf Hitler”). A turning point in the history of the Waffen-SS was when these newly founded guards took oath on November 9, 1933, and bounded themselves unconditionally to the *Führer*. The importance of this event stems from the fact that from this date on, the Waffen-SS was deprived from the control of the *Reichsführer* SS (Himmler) and NSDAP. What is more important was that Hitler’s guards were coming out as independent armed forces: independent from the Wehrmacht and police.¹⁰⁵ This newly established force was above the state and party, directly bound to Hitler.

The high command of the Wehrmacht did not welcome the events leading to the formation of an independent armed force out of their reach. The tension between the *Reichsführer* SS and the army high command remained high. Hitler played a

¹⁰² The events were known as Nacht der langen Messer (The Night of the Long Knives) or “Operation Hummingbird”.

¹⁰³ English translation of the newspaper report in *Völkischer Beobachter*, July 26, 1934. “The Führer elevates the SS to a standing of an Independent Organization.” Document No. 1857-PS, the Avalon Project.

¹⁰⁴ Document No. 1857-PS, the Avalon Project.

¹⁰⁵ Stein, p. 5.

“conciliatory” role between the two parties by managing the crisis. Up until the outbreak of the war, no official armed military SS division was formed. On the other hand, the commanders of the Wehrmacht were not that much pleased to observe the slow but steady expansion of the Waffen-SS until the war, and afterwards as well.¹⁰⁶

In 1936, the Waffen-SS was divided into two: the SS *Verfügungstruppe* (SS Dispositional Troops) with the Leibstandarte included in this branch, and the SS *Totenkopfverbände* (Death’s Head Formations).¹⁰⁷ According to Heinrich Himmler’s description, the Wehrmacht would protect Germany from the exterior and the SS from interior. However, the task of the fully independent Waffen-SS was not announced to the public. On the background, because the army and its personnel were far from the national socialist ideology, it was foreseen by the Nazis that the Waffen-SS would play a decisive role in the penetration of the Nazi ideology in the army.¹⁰⁸ From 1933 to 1937, Himmler expelled tens of thousands of people from the SS, who “proved unsuitable.”¹⁰⁹ In 1937, the total strength of the SS was 210,000 men.¹¹⁰

After the Reichskriegminister (Minister of War) Werner von Blomberg had resigned from his post on January 27, 1938, Hitler declared that no successor would be appointed for the Ministry of War, and he would command all the armed forces. The former Wehrmachtsamt (Armed Forces Office) in the Ministry of War would

¹⁰⁶ Stein, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ Stein, p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Stein, p. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Himmler’s own accounts in Document No. 1992-A-PS, “Organization and Obligations of the SS and the Police” at the National-Politischer Lehrgang der Wehrmacht (National Political Course for the Armed Forces), January 15-23, 1937, the Avalon Project.

¹¹⁰ Document No. 1992-A-PS, the Avalon Project.

become the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht or in short, OKW (High Command of the Armed Forces) and put under the command of Hitler.¹¹¹

Hitler set the common tasks of the German Army and the SS with a top-secret decree on August 17, 1938. According to this, the Allgemeine SS (General SS) would be unarmed and remain in the political sphere only. Himmler also stated in 1937 that the Allgemeine SS was “entirely civilian in nature except for the higher officer corps”¹¹² On the other hand, the SS *Verfügungstruppe*, SS Junkerschulen (officer schools of the SS), and the SS *Totenkopfverbände* would be armed and organized as military units. The SS *Verfügungstruppe* was given a two-dimensional mission: either it might serve under Oberkommando des Heeres (High Command of the Army, or in short, OKH),¹¹³ or in case of necessity, it can be put under *Reichsführer SS* to provide internal security.¹¹⁴ In September 1938, four Totenkopf (Death’s Head) battalions and the entire SS *Verfügungstruppe* were put under command of the Wehrmacht with Hitler’s orders.¹¹⁵ With the outbreak of the war, the three SS *Verfügungstruppe* regiments, Deutschland, Germania and Adolf Hitler unified and established a division.¹¹⁶

After the World War II began, in year 1940, the wartime status of the Waffen-SS needed to be defined clearly. After months of negotiations, OKW accepted that the SS could maintain an independent reserve under common

¹¹¹ Stein, p. 19.

¹¹² Document No. 1992-A-PS, the Avalon Project.

¹¹³ Theoretically, OKW was commanding on OKH. However after 1941, de facto, OKW commanded the Western Front, while OKH had the responsibility of the war in the East.

¹¹⁴ The SS *Verfügungstruppe* would be consisted of: one headquarters staff; *Leibstandarte “Adolf Hitler”*; the regiments “*Deutschland*”, “*Germania*”, and “*Der Führer*”; The time of service was four years. See, Document No. 1992-A-PS, the Avalon Project. Stein adds to these, two motorcycle battalions; one combat engineer battalion; one communication battalion; and one medical unit. See, p. 24-26.

¹¹⁵ Stein, p. 24.

¹¹⁶ Williamson, p. 46.

command of the SS and OKW. Consequently, on March 2, 1940, the Waffen-SS gained its official status.¹¹⁷

3.2 Germany's Politics for the East

It is necessary to shortly summarize the dynamics of German politics regarding the "East" in order to understand the roots of the anti-Bolshevism and the enmity against Russia. This was dominant in the German domestic politics before the World War II and directly affected the German attitude towards the peoples of the Soviet Union in the course of war.

In German pre-World War II rhetoric, Ost (East) generally referred to Germany's eastern neighbor, Russia. Both pro-Russian and anti-Russian elements had their roots in the historical background of Germany's foreign policy, dating back to times of Prussia. Especially after the World War I, during the 1920s, there was a dominance of the pro-Russians in the foreign policy of Germany. This was rather a "utilitarian" and economic design caused by the isolations imposed by the Versailles Treaty of 1919. This policy was justified by the idea that the "West" had been in decline, while Russia would emerge as a powerful nation in the future.¹¹⁸

On the other hand, anti-Russian foreign policy tendency in Germany referred to the motto of "expand to the East"¹¹⁹ of the German Reich.¹²⁰ The World War I and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, signed on March 3, 1918, were important turning points, which created the base of justification of their policies. After the

¹¹⁷ Stein, p. 48.

¹¹⁸ The supporters of pro-Russian policy in the German Army were people like Hans von Seeckt (see, Dr.h.c. Friedrich von Rabenau, Seeckt: Aus Seinem Leben 1918-1936, vol. 2 (Leipzig: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1940), pp. 305-320), afterwards Ernst Köstring and Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer. Pro-Russians in the German Foreign Ministry were people like Count Werner von der Schulenburg, a Baltic German born in the Imperial Russia and the last German Ambassador to Moscow. See, Dallin, pp. 5-10.

¹¹⁹ Drang nach Osten.

¹²⁰ Dallin, p. 6.

Russian Civil War, Bolshevism began to be the leading enemy of the anti-Russian group. Though these people had no real influence in the German foreign policy during 1920s, they came to foreground after National Socialist ideology's emergence in Germany.¹²¹ According to the National Socialist idea, Poland and Czechoslovakia should be erased from the map of Europe. The Nazis also planned the foundation of a small Polish remnant-state (*polnische Reststaat*) after the war, as a compensation for future peace talks.¹²²

The *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) and the Army constituted the mainstream dissent to the Nazi conception of the "East." Also, the pro-Russians, Propaganda Minister Joseph Göbbels and Erich Koch, were the important statesmen in Germany, who carried weight after the coming to power of the Nazis.¹²³

Though not pro-Russian, social democratic and leftist movements were also strong in Germany before the accession of Hitler to power. Rosa Luxemburg's "Spartacist movement" was the most well-known of the leftist groups.¹²⁴ Luxemburg severely criticized the October Revolution and Bolsheviks, especially about the nationalities issue. She criticized Lenin and Bolshevik party for being in contradiction between their "self-determination" policy and strong centralism in practice.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, Luxemburg could not avoid being an open target of the anti-Bolshevik movement.

¹²¹ Dallin, pp. 6-7.

¹²² Hans Werner Neulen, *An Deutscher Seite: Internationale Freiwillige von Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS* (Munich: Universitas, 1992), p. 297.

¹²³ Dallin, p. 10.

¹²⁴ Rosa Luxemburg (Polish: Róża Luksemburg) was an activist and leftist of Polish origin. She decided to move to Germany in 1898 to work for the German Social Democratic Party, murdered by the members of the Anti-Bolshevik League in 1919. See, Annette Insdorf, "Rosa Luxemburg: More than a Revolutionary," *New York Times*, May 31, 1987.

¹²⁵ Rosa Luxemburg, "The Nationalities Question in the Russian Revolution," in *The National Question - Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg*, H.B. Davis, ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

3.2.1 The Ministry for the East and Alfred Rosenberg

Just before the beginning of the German attack on the Soviet Union, on June 17, 1941, the *Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete* (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Regions, hereafter Ostministerium (Ministry for the East)) was established. After a month, on June 17, 1941, Hitler appointed Alfred Rosenberg to the post of the Ministry.¹²⁶

Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German,¹²⁷ and Adolf Hitler himself mainly designated Germany's wartime Eastern politics. But as will be seen below, their views regarding the Ostpolitik rarely coincided. Also, the policy of the Ostministerium and *Auswärtiges Amt* of Germany regarding the occupied Soviet territories differed.

Germans planned to divide the occupied parts of the Soviet territory into three. These would be the regions to be annexed by the “western neighbors,” civilian administrated regions, and military zone.¹²⁸ What was important here was that parts of the “East” were subsequently put under the civilian administration of the Ostministerium. But the larger parts of the occupied East were to be put under military rule.¹²⁹ The public order would be provided by the SS and German police forces in the newly acquired Eastern territories.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ “Erlaß des Führers über die Verwaltung der neubesetzten Ostgebiete vom 17. Juli 1941” in Percy E. Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht 1940-1941*, Eine Dokumentation, vol. 2 (Augsburg: Weltbild, 1996), p. 1027; Jürgen Thorwald, *Die Illusion: Rotarmisten gegen Stalin – Die Tragödie der Wlassow-Armee* (Munich: Knauer, 1995), p. 45.

¹²⁷ Rosenberg was born in the Imperial Russia, in Reval, in 1893.

¹²⁸ Dallin, p. 90.

¹²⁹ Dallin, p. 91.

¹³⁰ “Erlaß des Führers über die polizeiliche Sicherung der neubesetzten Ostgebiete vom 17. Juli 1941” in Schramm, p. 1028.

In accordance with the instructions of Hitler, Rosenberg planned to establish four regions in the occupied East.¹³¹ These would be the Ukraine, the Ostland, Muscovy and Caucasus. Accordingly, departments were set up in the Ostministerium. The Political Branch of the Ministry was planned to be led by Georg Leibbrandt,¹³² who envisaged five departments under this branch: General Politics, with Otto Bräutigam at the head; Ostland, with Ewald von Kleist at the head; Ukraine, with Wilhelm Kinklein at the head; Turkestan and Caucasus, with Prof. Gerhard von Mende at the head.¹³³ From all these people, von Mende was of special importance for the Turkic and Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union. He was closely following the nationality issues in the USSR and had academic works on Turks in the Soviet Union.¹³⁴ It is important to note here that after Germans attacked on the Soviet Union, among the planned regions, only Ukraine and Ostland could be established. Muscovy and Caucasus, however, remained on paper.¹³⁵

The Minister for the East, Alfred Rosenberg's opinion was in a direction that the occupied Soviet territories would remain under German rule. However, at a discussion with Hitler on December 14, 1941, he could not express his ideas to the *Führer* and proposed only that the newly captured eastern lands would remain "in German protection."¹³⁶ Hitler was of opinion that it would be enough, if these lands

¹³¹ Hitler planned that the newly acquired lands in Russia would be divided into Reichskommissariats (Reich - commissariats). These commissariats would be divided into Generalbezirks (general districts) and general districts into Kriegsgebiets (battle zones). See, "Erlaß des Führers über die Verwaltung der neubesetzten Ostgebiete vom 17. Juli 1941" in Schramm, p. 1027.

¹³² Born in 1899, Leibbrandt joined the NSDAP in 1933. He became the director of the "East Department" at the Foreign Policy Bureau of the Party. After the German attack on the Soviet Union, in June 1941, he became the director of Hauptabteilung I (Politik) (Political Branch) of the Ministry for the East.

¹³³ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 45-46.

¹³⁴ See, Gerhard von Mende, *Der Nationale Kampf der Russlandtürken* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1936), *Nationalität und Ideologie* (Bonn, 1962); for its Turkish translation, see, Gerhard von Mende, *Komünist Bloktu Milliyet ve Mefkure*, (Ankara: AÜ Yayınevi, 1962).

¹³⁵ Dallin, p. 91.

¹³⁶ Document No. 1517-PS. "Top Secret Memorandum about Discussions [of Rosenberg] with the Fuehrer," 14 December 1941, the Avalon Project.

not again ruled by communism and Germany “appeared secured” from its eastern side.¹³⁷

According to Rosenberg, as a wartime strategy, Germany should treat the non-Russian citizens of the Soviet Union, as well as those in the German POW camps, different than the Russian nationals. He tried to persuade Hitler, that “the Ukrainians, White Russians, Caucasians should be divided from Russia, and colonized by Germany, or at least, brought under German influence,” so that a “buffer” can be established against the Russians. He also planned to divide Russia into five parts. These five parts were to be named as Reichskommissariats of Ukraine, Moscow, Caucasus, Ostland (Baltic lands) and Turkestan.¹³⁸ His plan was tried to be realized during the German occupation of the Soviet Union.

The planned Reichskommissariats were divided into “general commissariats” and the general commissariats into “regional commissariats”.¹³⁹ When Rosenberg completed his plans by April 1941 on the Eastern Front, all the other official posts in Germany related to the Ostpolitik had concluded their projections about their “future colonies.”¹⁴⁰

The Ukraine was planned by Rosenberg to be widened towards east in order to include the planned Deutsche Wolgarepublik (German Volga Republic) in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine. The Caucasus in Rosenberg’s mind was also much broader than the accustomed total of Transcaucasia and Caucasus. Moreover, Germans planned to give the peoples of the Caucasus extensive autonomy, in order to use their traditional hostility towards Russians. As for the Reichskommissariat

¹³⁷ Document No. 1517-PS, the Avalon Project.

¹³⁸ Jürgen Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 32-41.

¹³⁹ Otto Bräutigam, *So Hat Es Sich Zugetragen: Ein Leben als Soldat und Diplomat* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1968), p 302.

¹⁴⁰ Patrick von zur Mühlen, *Gamalıhaç ile Kızılyıldız Arasında: İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Sovyet Doğu Halklarının Milliyetçiliği* (Ankara: Mavi Yayınlar, 1984), p. 38.

Turkestan, it would contain the land populated by the Turkic peoples. It was planned to reach towards northwest towards Moscow to cover the landmass, where groups like Chuvash and Mordvins lived. There was a little but very important detail regarding these plans of Rosenberg that Hitler did not approve them.¹⁴¹

Thus, one can say that there was no reconciliation on the Ostpolitik in the governmental circles of Germany. The confusion was more obvious when it came to Turkestan issue, even before the invasion of the Soviet Union began. This situation would make itself felt better, when the issue of the Turkestani POWs and Turkestan Legion occurred.

Werner Otto von Hentig from the Foreign Ministry also confessed the disagreement about the Ostpolitik between the *Auswärtiges Amt* and Ostministerium. He stated that the Ministry for the East wanted to govern the occupied Soviet territories by itself and as a whole. The underlying factor of this view was the perception by the Ministry for the East that the “peoples of the newly gained lands” had no educated and available men to govern these lands. The Foreign Ministry thought that they did. It wanted to temporarily establish autonomous governments under German administration compatible with the characteristics and majorities of the people living there. After the war, permanent administrations could be founded according to the will of the peoples.¹⁴² Also, as Gerhard von Mende stated, the future position of Crimea was unclear.¹⁴³ Hüsrev

¹⁴¹ Bräutigam, pp. 301-302. See appendix, Map 4, for the planned German administration in the East.

¹⁴² Müstecib Ülküsal, *Kırım Yolunda Bir Ömür* (Ankara: Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Genel Merkezi Yayınları, 1999), p. 304.

¹⁴³ Ülküsal, p. 294.

Gerede, the Turkish Ambassador to Berlin at that time, also confirmed this disagreement.¹⁴⁴

Hitler and the Foreign Ministry were also in disagreement on the Ostpolitik. According to Hitler, the Foreign Ministry should not give assurances, which could not be realized regarding the Caucasus region.¹⁴⁵ Since Rosenberg did not have enough effect on the Nazi Party, his ideas had not been much influential. Rosenberg himself wrote in his memoirs that his demands on the Ostpolitik “were turned down” because of Himmler, Koch and Bormann.¹⁴⁶

Rosenberg was not alone in his views regarding the Ostpolitik. The ideological criticism of the official Eastern policy of the Nazi Party was known as “Rosenberg conception.”¹⁴⁷ Paul Joseph Göbbels was also not in the same view of the Nazi policies on the East. He thought that in the occupied zones of the Soviet Union, local governments should be established.¹⁴⁸ Otto Bräutigam had also similar views. He proposed to win the hearts of the population in the occupied East in favor of Germany. He supported the freedom of religion in the Soviet Union and the abolition of the kolkhoz.¹⁴⁹ The SS should be kept away from the occupied regions in order not to arise an impression of police state.¹⁵⁰ In this regard, it is important to note that Bräutigam put a clear distinction between Jews and Soviet Citizens. Himmler and Hitler did however, not take this latter proposal of him seriously.

¹⁴⁴ Hüsrev Gerede began his mission on September 3, 1939, two days after the outbreak of the World War II. He was an officer during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922) at the headquarters of Mustafa Kemal. See, Hüsrev Gerede, *Sıgımakta Kaleme Alınan Belgesel: Harb İçinde Almanya* (İstanbul, ABC Ajansı Yayınları, 1994), p. 25 and p. 32.

¹⁴⁵ Hitler on the “oil of Caucasus,” May 9, 1942. See Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941-42* (Bonn: Athenäum Verlag, 1951), p. 81.

¹⁴⁶ Alfred Rosenberg, *Memoirs of Alfred Rosenberg* (Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publication, 1949), p. 280.

¹⁴⁷ Fischer, p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ Fischer categorizes Göbbels in the “Utilitarian” group, which criticized to the official Ostpolitik not because of ideological reasons, but because of pragmatic reasons. Fischer, p. 12.

¹⁴⁹ Kolkhoz was the short form of the Russian kollektivnoye khoziaistvo, meaning collective farm (service), appeared as an antithesis of “family farms” after 1917.

¹⁵⁰ Bräutigam, p. 305.

3.3 Hitler's Views on the Soviet Union

Hitler wanted to "Europeanize" and, for this reason, to annex Crimea together with the territories north of it, Volga region, and Baku to Germany. He desired that in the long term, Germans would populate these lands in accordance with his Lebensraum policy. Himmler made clear that he was also supporting Hitler's views on this issue at a speech delivered on June 9, 1942.¹⁵¹

There were some problems with the plans of Hitler. For instance, the eastern borders for the Reichskommissariat Russia were ambiguous. Rosenberg foresaw borders reaching near Ural Mountains; while Hitler decided that the march of the armies should be until Archangelsk-Astrakhan line (AA-Linie).¹⁵²

In the short term, Hitler's leading enemies were Jews and Bolshevism. So, he intended to destroy the Slavic masses, and establish colonies in the best parts of the Soviet Union thereafter.¹⁵³ Himmler further stated that he calculated to use the Soviet POWs as slave laborers in the industry district, planned to be constructed in Auschwitz.¹⁵⁴ However, no such desire or policy was obviously declared by the Germans concerning the Central Asia. This would strengthen hands of the German officers during the immediate foundation of the Turkestani troops, as well as the National Turkestan Union Committee.

Hitler seemingly was planning to rule the people of the Soviet Union initially by force. However, he thought that force alone was not enough. Psychological factors should be included in the process, namely propaganda

¹⁵¹ Bradley F. Smith and Agnes F. Peterson, eds., *Heinrich Himmler: Geheimreden 1933 bis 1945 und Andere Ansprachen* (Frankfurt/Main: Propyläen Verlag, 1974), pp. 145-161.

¹⁵² Bräutigam, p. 301.

¹⁵³ Streit, pp. 25-26.

¹⁵⁴ Streit, p. 28.

activities across the occupied east.¹⁵⁵ With the help of the German propaganda, during the occupation of the Soviet Union by the Wehrmacht, German soldiers were greeted as “liberators” in some places of the occupied Soviet Union. However, as stated above, German authorities had different intentions. Soon after the Wehrmacht’s march, SD, SS and Gestapo arrived to the occupied Soviet lands and established a “reign of terror.” As a result, power of the partisans against the German occupation increased.¹⁵⁶

3.3.1 National Socialist Race Politics and Turkic Peoples

According to the official Nazi ideology and Hitler’s own views, the Asiatic peoples were sub-humans, oriental and barbaric. Therefore they should not be permitted to carry weapons. He thought that the weapons in the non-German people’s hands would turn to them sooner or later.¹⁵⁷

Hitler said on April 11, 1942 that it would be a great nonsense to give subordinated people weapons in the occupied eastern territories. According to him, the history showed that if the Herrenvölker (master peoples) gave their subordinates weapons, they somehow perished.¹⁵⁸ Himmler’s pamphlet *Der Untermensch* also reflects the Nazi position on the peoples of the east.¹⁵⁹ In contrast to the proposal of Otto Bräutigam, the head of the General Politics department of the Ostministerium, Himmler persuaded Hitler of the necessity of the SS deployment behind the front lines in the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Dallin, pp. 497-498. See also, Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 30, The Harvard Project, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Chris Bishop, *Hitler’s Foreign Divisions: Foreign Volunteers in the Waffen-SS (1940-1945)* (London: Amber Books, 2005), p. 68.

¹⁵⁷ These words of Hitler corresponded to one month after the invasion of the Soviet Union, July 16, 1941. His words were: “Nie darf erlaubt werden, daß ein Anderer Waffen trägt, als der Deutsche!” Neulen, p. 17.

¹⁵⁸ Hitler on “Stalin and individual freedoms,” April 11, 1942, Picker, p. 73.

¹⁵⁹ *Der Untermensch*, (SS-Hauptamt, Schlungsamt, Nordland Verlag, 1942).

¹⁶⁰ Bräutigam, p. 307.

The instructions to be obeyed by the troops involving in the attack on the Soviet Union¹⁶¹ reflected more or less this view. According to this document, Bolshevism was the fatal enemy (Todfeind) of the German people. Against the members of the Red Army, the soldiers had to be, without hesitation, extremely careful. In the instructions, the German Army personnel were warned that the “Bolshevik Red Army soldier conducted sabotage, seditious propaganda, incendiarism, murder.” Therefore, they “lost all claims to treatment as an honorable opponent in accordance with the Geneva Convention.”¹⁶²

German military historian Hans Werner Neulen remarks that the Turkic peoples and the Cossacks were in some kind of “privileged” position in the eyes of the Nazis among other Soviet peoples. Hitler stated in a speech on December 12, 1942 that the only people he trusted were the “pure Muslims,” the “real Turkic people (*wirkliche Turkvölker*).”¹⁶³ Also, Wilhelm Keitel¹⁶⁴ connoted on June 8, 1943, that the Turkic peoples were exempted by the Germans [from the Russians], since they were the “keen enemies” of the Bolshevism. They could not be subject of debate.¹⁶⁵

One should bear in mind here that both these speeches were held at least one and a half year after the German attacks on the Soviet Union. Thus, it can be said that these proclamations were rather pragmatic and wartime hypocrisy, which did not reflect the real German intentions. However, it should also be noted that at least some very important German authorities and bureaucrats showed a diversion from

¹⁶¹ *Richtlinien für das Verhalten der Truppe in Rußland.*

¹⁶² Document No. 1519-PS, The National Socialist German Workers Party, Party Chancellery, Führer Headquarters, Circular No. 21/41. Subject: Treatment of Soviet Prisoners of War, the Avalon Project.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Neulen, p. 323.

¹⁶⁴ Field Marshal Wilhelm Bodewin Gustav Keitel was born in 1882. He became the head of the OKW in 1938.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Neulen, p. 323.

the official Nazi racist policies regarding the Turkic peoples, even if they pursued pragmatic aims and had different motivations.

3.4 The Foreign Volunteers in the Waffen-SS before the Operation Barbarossa

There were non-Germans in the Waffen-SS before the German attack on the Soviet Union. The most important reason for this was the tension between the German Army and the Armed SS on the issue of recruitment.¹⁶⁶ The SS followed a two-dimensional policy for expansion and to increase its number of personnel. Firstly, it endeavored to attract men from the younger population of Germany and secondly, the SS tried to gather volunteers from outside the Reich. The occupied lands outside of the German Reich were not under direct authority of the Wehrmacht.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the German Army High Command, still objecting the expansion of the Waffen-SS, could not intervene this second unofficial way of recruitment.

The recruitment of the non-Germans began before the outbreak of World War II. In 1938, Himmler allowed the Germanics¹⁶⁸ into the ranks of the Waffen-SS. However, the number of the volunteers in the Waffen-SS remained limited. By the end of 1938, only twenty such volunteers were included in it.¹⁶⁹

The occupation of the Denmark, Norway, Belgium and Holland by Germany brought another dimension to the foreign recruitment to the Waffen-SS. On April 30,

¹⁶⁶ The ratio for the army recruitment in Germany was set to 66:9:25, respectively for the Land Army, Navy and Air Force. The Waffen-SS would recruit its personnel from the quota of the Army, but the number was to be set by Hitler. See, Stein, p. 99.

¹⁶⁷ Williamson, p. 58; Stein, pp. 93-94.

¹⁶⁸ According to the official Nazi race ideology, some people living in the Europe were of "Nordic" and "Germanic" blood. These were named as Volksdeutsche, while the German citizens at that time were named as Reichsdeutsche.

¹⁶⁹ See appendix for the numbers of the foreigners in the Waffen-SS.

1940, a decree was issued ordering the establishment of the SS *Standarte "Nordland"* (SS regiments "Northern lands"). The personnel of this regiment were to be consisted of volunteers from Denmark and Norway. This unit would become the 5th SS Panzer Division "Wiking" in the late stages of the war.¹⁷⁰

The establishment of the first foreign volunteer divisions gave way to forming further divisions. On June 15, 1940, the SS *Standarte "Westland"* (SS regiments "Western lands") was established from the peoples of Netherlands and the Flemish regions of Belgium. When it came to July, the Waffen-SS got enough men to form a second SS *Standarte "Westland"*. The volunteers of the foreign divisions of the Waffen-SS were brought to SS training centers.¹⁷¹

Towards the end of 1940, OKW was aware that the SS had exceeded its authorized personnel quota. After the start of the recruiting campaign to the Waffen-SS, Berger called fifteen thousand men to the ranks of the Totenkopfdivision. This number was eleven thousand more than actually authorized by Hitler.¹⁷²

From Norway to Great Britain, there was ever no nationality, which did not apply for volunteering in the Wehrmacht or Waffen-SS. In the Western Europe, volunteers from Holland, Flanders, Wallonia, France, Luxembourg, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, and Ireland; in the North, volunteers from Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, and Finland joined to the ranks of Germans. People from Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Italy, Slovakia, Bohemia, Mähren and volunteers from the Baltic States and Poland fought on German side.¹⁷³ At the time, when the

¹⁷⁰ Marc J. Rikmenspoel, *Waffen-SS Encyclopedia* (Bedford: The Aberjona Press, 2004), p. 84.

¹⁷¹ Stein, p. 94.

¹⁷² Between January 15 and June 30, 1940, Berger called 59,526 men to the Waffen-SS, including police forces and Totenkopfdivision. See, Stein, pp. 95-97.

¹⁷³ For detailed information, see, Hans Werner Neulen, *An Deutscher Seite: Internationale Freiwillige von Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS* (Munich: Universitas, 1992); Gordon Williamson, *Waffen-SS Handbook 1933-1945* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2005);

Operation Barbarossa began on June 22, 1941, the number of the Germanic volunteers only in the SS-Wiking Division reached to nearly one thousand men.¹⁷⁴ The divisions of the Waffen-SS were employed in the German attack on the Soviet Union in three army groups.¹⁷⁵

It is understood from the memoirs of Alfred Rosenberg that he and Himmler were in disagreement on the volunteer battalions of the “Eastern peoples.” With the administration of those, who were “considered Germanic,” Rosenberg had no problems.¹⁷⁶ But he regarded the “Asiatic” POWs, “with whom [he] was on very friendly terms,” as being in his own sphere of influence.¹⁷⁷ However, Himmler influenced Hitler in favor of Russian General Vlasov and other non-Russians, who wanted to fight on the side of the German Army, without informing Rosenberg.¹⁷⁸

3.4.1 The Nazi Ideology and the Foreign Volunteers

The strict principles of the Nazi race ideology did not permit anyone who wanted to volunteer on its side. The Waffen-SS might accept auxiliaries from the Nordic people, but when it came to the Slavic and Asiatic “Eastern” peoples, it was unthinkable that the German Army would permit recruitments from them.

The main factors, which determined the German attitude towards the non-Germans within the ranks of the Wehrmacht, depended on some criteria. At first, the nationality of the soldier was important. This corresponded to “racial purity” in German documents. Second was the political goals pursued by the German military

Marc J. Rikmenspoel, *Waffen-SS Encyclopedia* (Bedford: The Aberjona Press, 2004).

¹⁷⁴ The unit composed of 631 Dutch, 294 Norwegians, 216 Danes, 1 Swede, 1 Swiss soldiers, total 1,143 men. Rikmenspoel, p. 85. The total strength of the Waffen-SS before the Operation Barbarossa was 160,405.

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter IV for the employment of the Waffen-SS in the Operation Barbarossa, Appendix I for the total strength of the Waffen-SS at the beginning of the German attacks on the Soviet Union.

¹⁷⁶ Rosenberg, p. 280.

¹⁷⁷ Rosenberg, p. 280.

¹⁷⁸ Rosenberg, p. 280.

and political leadership in relation to a nation. Third defining criterion of the hierarchy was, rather pragmatic, to which branch of the Wehrmacht the volunteer soldier belonged. Finally, the German commanders looked to the fighting qualities of the foreign volunteer formations. In some cases, this criterion could “overlap” even the nationality of the personnel.¹⁷⁹

The political aims German authorities endeavored to reach by establishing legions from the peoples of the East could not easily be understood by the German officers. Under the influence of Nazi racism, they kept on insulting legionnaires, even after the official establishment of the Eastern Legions. Colonel Ralph von Heygendorff¹⁸⁰ reported that some German battalion commanders declared in the presence of Turkic officers, who understood German, that the mission of the Turk-Battalions was to “save valuable German blood in the front.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Oleg Valentinovich Romanko, “Musulmanskije Formirovaniia v Vermahte i Voiskah SS (1941-1945) K Voprosu o Voenno-Politicheskom Statuse Inostrannikh Dobrovoltsev v Germanskikh Voorujennyh Silah,” *Kultura Narodov Prichernomorya* (No. 38, Simferopol, 2003), pp. 82-85.

¹⁸⁰ Heygendorff led an infantry regiment by “Army Group Center” at the Eastern Front until his nomination as the “Commander of the Deployment Staff of the Eastern Legions” in Rembertow. See, Thorwald, p. 135.

¹⁸¹ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 136-137.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ON THE EVE OF THE WORLD WAR II

Not only the domestic politics of Germany and the Soviet Union, but also the international relations between the states directly or indirectly involved in the pre-World War II diplomacy are important to better understand the background of the recruitment of the Turkestani POWs into the German Army ranks to fight against the Soviet Union. In this chapter, the diplomatic maneuvers of the Soviet Union, Germany and Turkey will be examined shortly before going into detailed analysis of the Turkestani troops on German side.

4.1 General Atmosphere before the World War II

Long before the war had begun, Hitler began to conduct an aggressive foreign policy, which was also targeted against the USSR. The tense atmosphere was felt also in the diplomatic circles in Europe. In his report to London, Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador to Berlin, stated that up until August 8, 1939, the number one “public enemy” of the Germans was Great Britain and “the policy of encirclement.” But after that date, a policy change in German foreign policy occurred and Poles took the “leading place.”¹⁸²

¹⁸² Sir Nevile Henderson, Final Report by the Right Honourable Sir Nevile Henderson G.C.M.G. on the Circumstances Leading to the Termination of His Mission to Berlin, September 20, 1939 (Final Report hereafter) (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1939), p. 7.

Before the outbreak of the war, Germans brought up the Danzig and Corridor issues.¹⁸³ In the publications of that time, comments appeared that this question would result with a war and Germany's territorial "disintegrity" at that time was unsustainable.¹⁸⁴ On this issue, Hitler openly criticized British with fledging an "unconditional support" to Poland. He raised the German concerns about the Germans living in Poland in this regard. Germany warned Britain that the British support to Poland would not affect Germany's determination "to solve these issues."¹⁸⁵ Thereby, Poland became the first item on the agenda of the European diplomacy. England tried to dissuade Hitler from attacking Poland, but Hitler did not change his mind on the "Polish question."¹⁸⁶ He stated at the Reichstag, on April 28, 1939, the Polish government rejected his proposals on these subjects.¹⁸⁷

Until September, 3, 1939, Ambassadors of France and the Great Britain followed the events with concerns and ultimatums to German authorities. The following day, the French and British Ambassadors respectively left Berlin.¹⁸⁸

At his speech held on October 6, 1939 in the Reichstag, in the presence of foreign representatives, Hitler praised mutual and continuous cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he stated that the USSR and Germany would do anything to preserve the peace in Europe and well-being of the peoples of

¹⁸³ After the World War I, a buffer region, the "Free City of Danzig" (Gdańsk in Polish) was established between Poland's access to the Baltic Sea and Germany. Danzig was a city of German language and culture. With the Versailles Treaty, it was economically bound to Poland with the League of Nations being its protector. See, Reinhard Haferkorn, "Danzig and the Polish Corridor," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939) (Vol. 12, No. 2 (March, 1933)), p. 226. See also, Geo. G. Chisholm, "The Free City of Danzig," *The Geographical Journal* (Vol. 55, No. 4 (April, 1920)), pp. 305-309.

¹⁸⁴ Reinhard Haferkorn quotes from Mr. Yeats-Brown's article appeared in *The Speculator* (September 1933). See, Haferkorn, p. 224.

¹⁸⁵ "Communication from the German Chancellor to the Prime Minister, handed to His Majesty's Ambassador on August 23, 1939." For the full text of this document, see, Sir Neville Henderson, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin 1937-1939* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), pp. 316-319.

¹⁸⁶ Henderson, *Final Report*, p. 10.

¹⁸⁷ The British War Bluebook, "Extract from Herr Hitler's Speech to the Reichstag," on April 28, 1939, No. 13, the Avalon Project.

¹⁸⁸ Henderson, *Final Report*, p. 26.

Poland.¹⁸⁹ Further, Hitler told to Henderson in an interview that Germany was determined not to “enter into conflict with Russia.”¹⁹⁰

4.2 The Soviet - German Relations before the World War II

Hitler, for numerous times, repeated his intention to expand towards the east. He had written his most obvious statements about this in the *Mein Kampf*. According to Hitler, it is unavoidable that German territories would expand towards the east, at the expense of the Soviet Union. He saw England as the only ally in Europe in order to realize this policy.¹⁹¹

One may think that Hitler wrote the *Mein Kampf* a very long time before the World War II began, and thus, his ideas and policies might have been changed in due course. Also, the statements about Russia can be evaluated as wishful thinking, nationalistic and unrealistic dreams of a German politician at that time being. However, Hitler’s biographer Konrad Heiden also warned the world at that time about Hitler’s territorial expansion aims.¹⁹²

Stalin foresaw that another world war is about to break out long before the World War II. He repeatedly stated that the international environment “resembled the prelude of World War in 1917.”¹⁹³ Stalin’s foreign policy was based on, among

¹⁸⁹ Gereide was also present at the speech. See, Gereide, p. 34. See also, Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations: 1932-1945*, vol.3 (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1997), pp. 1836-1837.

¹⁹⁰ “Supplementary Communication from the German Chancellor handed to His Majesty’s Ambassador on August 25, 1939.” Henderson, *Failure of a Mission*, pp. 319-321.

¹⁹¹ Hitler had also an alliance with Russia against Britain in mind, in order to realize his colonial and world trade plans. See, Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated into English by James Murphy (London, New York, Melbourne: Hurst and Blackett Ltd, 1941), pp. 119-121.

¹⁹² Meir Michaelis quotes from Konrad Heiden, *Adolf Hitler. Eine Biographie II: Ein Mann gegen Europa* (Zurich, 1937). See, Meir Michaelis “World Power Status or World Dominion? A Survey of the Literature on Hitler’s ‘Plan of World Dominion’ (1937-1970),” *The Historical Journal*, (Vol. 15, No. 2 (June, 1972)), p. 332.

¹⁹³ As Tucker stated, Stalin three times repeated this statement in party forums in 1925. He repeated

others, a hostile encirclement of the Soviet Union by capitalist world powers.¹⁹⁴ The opposition of Trotsky and his foreign policy conceptualization was also purged long before the World War II began, which meant the formula of “peaceful coexistence” between the Soviet Union and capitalism was no longer on the agenda of foreign policy of the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁵

Stalin also purged most of the former officers of the Red Army by the time the World War II started. Because of the imminent need, the Soviet government quickly graduated officers from the military schools in 1941. But the newly-graduated officers were not informed about a possible German attack at all. They thought that Hitler would not act against an international agreement.¹⁹⁶ Actually, the Red Army would train officers from the relatively educated privates in the army later on, during the course of Russo-German battles in the World War II.

4.2.1 The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

There were two basic foreign policy conceptions in the USSR in the days before the World War II. These lasted until the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany was signed. The first was the “Comintern Policy,” represented by Georgi Mihov Dimitrov, favored “extreme Soviet pressure inside democratic countries.” The second was the “Litvinov Policy,” which favored sensible relations with the West.¹⁹⁷ The German threat on the Soviet Union annulled these conceptions. Stalin sought alliances with the Western powers, also including Germany, to protect the borders of the country.

his forecasts about a second world war during the “Great Depression” of 1929. See, Robert C. Tucker, “The Emergence of Stalin’s Foreign Policy,” *Slavic Review* (vol.36, no. 4, Dec. 1977), p. 563 and 568.

¹⁹⁴ Tucker, p. 563.

¹⁹⁵ Tucker, p. 567.

¹⁹⁶ Stephen L. Crane, *Survivor from an Unknown War* (Upland: Diane Publishing, 1999), p. 58-60.

¹⁹⁷ “Stalin Confers on Reply from Britain,” *Telegraph*, May 8, 1939.

It is not a secret that Stalin was aware of the German aims on the Soviet soil. This can also be seen clearly by the official documents and reports to Stalin.¹⁹⁸ The British intelligence service, which infiltrated into German communication, warned the USSR against the German plans up until the Operation Barbarossa began.¹⁹⁹ By the time, the Soviet Union reached a partial “cooperation agreement” with Britain, France, Poland and Romania on July 24, 1939. But this was not satisfactory for the Soviet Union, which demanded right-of-passage over Poland and Romania.

On February 20, 1939, William Seeds,²⁰⁰ British Ambassador to Moscow, was reporting that the Soviet Union would follow a policy of “opportunism and realism,” omitting ideal and moral principles.²⁰¹ The Turkish Ambassador to Berlin, Hüsrev Gerede also observed that since spring 1939, there was a desire for rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Germany. Shortly afterwards, negotiations began between the USSR and Germany.²⁰²

Because of the mutual distrust, the negotiations progressed in a slow manner.²⁰³ The telegram of the German Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador to Moscow just before the eve of the signing the pact had a clearly friendly tone about Russia. It stated that the only reason for mutual hostility was the differing ideologies of the states and recent developments showed “that differing

¹⁹⁸ German plans about Poland and Romania, as well as an independent Ukraine were known by the Soviet authorities. See, “Summary Report of the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin on the Political Situation in Germany, March 11, 1939,” in Ö. Andaç Uğurlu, ed., *2. Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye Üzerine Gizli Pazarlıklar (1939-1944)* (İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2003), p. 25.

¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, Stephen Pope and James Taylor, *The Meridian Encyclopedia of the Second World War* (New York: Meridian, 1992), p. 146.

²⁰⁰ Seeds arrived to Moscow on January 21, 1939. For the details of the Seeds’ mission, see, Sidney Aster, “Sir William Seeds: The Diplomat as Scapegoat” in Brian P. Farrell, ed., *Leadership and Responsibility in the Second World War* (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), pp. 121-167.

²⁰¹ Quoted in Gerede, p. 20.

²⁰² Gerede, p. 20.

²⁰³ Gerede, p. 20.

world outlooks do not prohibit a reasonable relationship between the two states, and the restoration of cooperation of a new and friendly type.”²⁰⁴

Various issues were on the agenda during the talks. Firstly, the Soviet side was assured that the friendship between Germany and Japan was “not directed against the Soviet Union.”²⁰⁵ Secondly, Soviet side was informed about the intentions of Italy reaching beyond Albania. German Foreign Minister stated that Mussolini “welcomed” the friendly relations between the USSR and Germany.²⁰⁶ Following these, the sides talked about England and France. Stalin stated that the world dominance of Britain should come to an end, since its military was weaker than it had been in the past. The number of annual recruits of France to army was less than Germany. Thus, Hitler was sure that France “would certainly be conquered,” if it “attempted to wage war with Germany.”²⁰⁷ Turkey was also an important item on the agenda. This will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Consequently, a non-aggression pact, named after the ministers of foreign affairs of both countries as Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, between the Soviet Union and Germany was signed on August 23, 1939. Gereide stated that the signature of the Pact wiped out the hopes for peace. The coming to terms of the Nazis and Bolsheviks surprised the whole world.²⁰⁸ German and Soviet governments divided the Eastern Europe in spheres of influence. The regions from Baltic Sea to Black

²⁰⁴ Telegram from The Reich Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Schulenburg), on August 14, 1939, 10:53 p.m., received August 15, 1939, 4:40 a.m., No. 175, the Avalon Project.

²⁰⁵ “Memorandum of a Conversation Held on the Night of August 23 to 24, between the Reich Foreign Minister, on the one hand, and Herr Stalin and the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars Molotov, on the other hand,” in Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie, eds., *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office* (Department of State Publications, 1948), p. 72.

²⁰⁶ Sontag and Beddie, p. 73.

²⁰⁷ Sontag and Beddie, p. 74.

²⁰⁸ Gereide, p. 19.

Sea, including Bessarabia, were “assigned” to the Soviet Union.²⁰⁹ Germany was more interested in economics, since it drew its economical sphere of influence in the Southeastern Europe, including İstanbul and the Straits as well.²¹⁰

After the war started, the British Prime Minister’s radio broadcasted speech addressed to Germans living in Great Britain reflected the disappointment of the Western powers about Hitler’s credibility. He stated that Hitler promised to respect the Locarno Treaties of 1925, not to annex Austria, Czechoslovakia and any Polish provinces, which he violated. He added, that Hitler “has sworn ... for years that he was the mortal enemy of Bolshevism; he is now its ally.”²¹¹

Obviously, both Germany and Russia were suspicious about their actions. They wanted to quell these suspicions by the signing of the Pact. Stalin, on his behalf, was trying to gain time before the possible German attacks. There was another reason for the signing of the pact as well. Both Russia and Germany were excluded from the European diplomacy in the 1920s and 1930s.²¹² Thus, it can also be said that it had been a compulsory partnership. It was obvious that the non-aggression treaty between Germany and the USSR would not secure a long lasting peace in the East.

According to Gereide, Hitler’s rapid successes in Poland forced Stalin to concern more about a possible forthcoming German attack. He ordered starting of the negotiations regarding the partition of Poland on September 20, 1939. Molotov

²⁰⁹ Harry N. Howard, “Germany, the Soviet Union and Turkey during World War II,” The Department of State Bulletin (Vol. XIX, No 472, July, 1948), p. 63.

²¹⁰ Howard, p. 63.

²¹¹ The British War Bluebook, “The Prime Minister's Broadcast Talk to the German People,” on September 4, 1939, No. 144, the Avalon Project.

²¹² The Meridian Encyclopedia of the Second World War, p. 145.

contacted with Graf von Schulenburg, German Ambassador to Moscow in order to begin negotiations.²¹³

Germany already had defensive military buildups at its eastern borders and these were increased by the summer of 1940. By September 1940, the military buildup at the border was far from being defensive. A second treaty was signed between the USSR and Germany on January 10, 1941. But, Hitler's concerns about a possible Soviet advance towards Baltics and Romania were still on the ground.²¹⁴ Nearly five months later, Hitler would order the first attacks against his eastern neighbor.

4.3 Diplomatic Ties between Turkey, Germany and Soviet Union

Turkey's position and international relations before and during the World War II played a decisive role in the fate of the Turkestani formations in the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS. It is necessary here to shortly summarize the relations of Turkey with Germany and the USSR, which are usually considered as balancing all sides to protect it from involving in the conflict.

In 1939, just months before the outbreak of the war, Turkey's policy can be summarized in three main points: Firstly, Turkey tried to preserve its interests and maintain peace parallel to the policies of United Kingdom and France. Secondly, Turkey sought assistance of world powers for the defense of the Turkish Straits in case of an attack. Finally, it endeavored, if possible, to penetrate into the policies of the Soviet Union and obtain the cooperation of this state.²¹⁵

²¹³ Gerede, p. 35.

²¹⁴ Gerede, p. 35.

²¹⁵ Feridun Cemal Erkin, *Türk - Sovyet İlişkileri ve Boğazlar Meselesi* (Ankara: Başnur Matbaası,

On the proposal of Ulrich Friedrich Wilhelm Joachim von Ribbentrop, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany (in office 1938-1945), Franz von Papen was appointed as the German Ambassador to Ankara on April 18, 1939.²¹⁶ On this date, the talks between Turkey and the Allies (France and the United Kingdom) were already underway. Papen arrived in Turkey on April 29, 1939, at the same day when Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vladimir Potemkin was visiting Ankara as well. Potemkin tried to persuade İnönü for cooperation between the Balkan states against Germany. Papen, on the other hand, inculcated that no fears from a German attack was necessary.²¹⁷

Papen's first mission in Turkey was to impede a rapprochement between Turkey and Germany. In essence, unaware of the negotiations of the Soviet Union with Germany and the Allies, Turkey was aiming to preserve the "friendship" with the Allies and the Soviet Union at the same time. Meanwhile, from the point of view of Britain, Turkey was perceived as being "very close to Britain" in early May, 1939.²¹⁸

On October 19, 1939, Turkey, France and United Kingdom signed a tripartite treaty following the negotiations between these states. According to this treaty, if Italy entered the war, Turkey had to cooperate with the Allies, which obliged Turkey to declare war. During the war, however, Turkey remained neutral, relying on the Additional Protocol No. 2 of this tripartite treaty, which foresaw the shipment of necessary arms but especially motorized transport vehicles to Turkey

1968), p. 125.

²¹⁶ H. W. Blood-Ryan, *Franz von Papen: His Life and Times* (London: Rich and Cowan Ltd, 1939), p. 307.

²¹⁷ Howard, pp. 62-63.

²¹⁸ "Stalin Confers on Reply from Britain," *Telegraph*, May 8, 1939.

by the Allies.²¹⁹ Turkey found itself under strict pressure of Allies for joining the war immediately along with the pressure coming from Germany and Russia.

During the talks of Russo-German non-aggression pact, Turkey had been an important item on the agenda: Stalin asked Ribbentrop what Germany's views about Turkey were. The German Foreign Minister replied that Germany expressed desires for friendly relations to Turkey. He further stated that Turkey's response to this became, being "one of the first countries to join the encirclement pact against Germany." Stalin thereupon stated that "Soviet Union had also had a similar experience with the vacillating policy of the Turks."²²⁰

On German and Russian side, the bargains over Turkey were kept on, without any result. This meant that Germans could not draw Soviet Union into alliance against France and the United Kingdom. Shortly afterwards, Turkish Ambassador to Berlin Hüsrev Gerede was informed by Hitler per se about the bargains on Turkey.²²¹ Because of the fears of being "another Poland" to be partitioned between Germany and Russia, Turkey signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on March 25, 1941.

4.3.1 Stalin's Demands from Turkey

Foreign Minister of Turkey Şükrü Saraçoğlu (in office 1938-1942) visited Moscow from September 25 to October 17, 1939 in order to negotiate a possible non-aggression pact.²²² The ultimate aim of the Soviet Union at the talks was some restorations on the "Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Turkish

²¹⁹ For the details of the treaty, see Baskın Oran, ed., *Türk Dış Politikası*, Vol. 1 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), p. 426.

²²⁰ "Memorandum of a Conversation Held on the Night of August 23 to 24, Between the Reich Foreign Minister, on the one Hand, and Herr Stalin and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Molotov, on the Other Hand," the Avalon Project.

²²¹ Oran, p. 434.

²²² Oran, p. 416; Howard, p. 64.

Straits” of 1936 in favor of themselves, which Turkey objected. However, Molotov insisted on the restorations and laid them down as a requirement for Turco-Soviet cooperation.²²³

While Saraçoğlu was in Moscow, Ribbentrop visited the Soviet Union once again to discuss the spheres of influence of Germany and Soviet Union in Europe.²²⁴ This, combined with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, was a considerable shift in the position of the USSR. Because of the visit of Ribbentrop, Saraçoğlu had to wait for three weeks for the Soviet Union, which did not want to reach any decision before the second visit of German Minister was completed. This, however, was not appreciated by the Turkish government at all.²²⁵

Soviet position in talks with Turkey could be summarized in three points: firstly, the Soviet Union tried to ascertain Turkey’s neutrality, like Germany did. Secondly, Molotov insisted on the necessity of a mutual aid in the Balkans for sustainable peace. Finally, they insisted on keeping the Turkish Straits closed.²²⁶ Without any considerable result, Turkey’s negotiations with the USSR were ended on October 17, 1939. Two days later, Turkey signed a tripartite agreement with England and France.

Stalin wanted to secure the Soviet Union from a possible attack through the Turkish Straits and demanded free access to the Mediterranean Sea. Hitler agreed with Stalin on this point. For this to be realized, a revision of the Montreux

²²³ A. Suat Bilge, *Güç Komşuluk: Türkiye - Sovyetler Birliği İlişkileri 1920-1964* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1992), p. 144.

²²⁴ Howard, p. 64.

²²⁵ Howard, p. 65.

²²⁶ Howard, p. 65. Süleyman Tüzün, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Türkiye’de Dış Türkler Tartışmaları* (1939-1945) (Isparta: Fakülte Kitapevi, 2005), p. 87.

Convention was necessary. This was discussed by Molotov and Ribbentrop on November 13, 1939.²²⁷

During the war, Turkey let some warships of the Axis forces through the straits. Though these ships passed under the banner of “merchant ships,” this had been an open violation of the Montreux Treaty of 1936.²²⁸

4.3.2 Relations between Turkey and Germany

Turkey was of considerable significance for Germany. First reason for this was the Turkish Straits controlled by Turkey, which was a crucial issue regarding a possible attack against the Soviet Union. Secondly, unlike other countries in the Balkans, Turkey was a Muslim country whose religion was not bound to any great power.²²⁹ Further, Hitler had romantic memoirs of the alliance between Germany and Turkey in the World War I in mind. After the end of the World War II, he was planning that Germany to be an unambiguous friend of Turkey.²³⁰

Between numerous Turkish and German diplomats and statesmen, there was mutual respect rooting to the alliance in the World War I. For instance, when Hüsrev Gerede was informed that von Papen was a former officer, who fought in the World War I, he expressed his pleasure and felt sympathy for him.²³¹

Just after the outbreak of the World War II, on September 27, 1939 (the very day when Poland surrendered) Hitler received Hüsrev Gerede in the presence of

²²⁷ Howard, p. 67.

²²⁸ After the war, the USSR accused the Turkish Government of violating the Montreux Treaty because of the passing of the Axis warships Seefalke (passed in July 1941) and Tarvisio (passed in August 1941) through the straits (Note of USSR to Turkey, August 8, 1946). Turkey accepted that it let the Axis tanker Tarvisio through the straits. It added, however, that this was a “fraudulent act,” since the Turkish Government asked the Italian Government about the ship and got the answer that Tarvisio was no more a warship, it sailed only for commercial purposes. Bilge, pp. 300-305.

²²⁹ Hitler on “Bulgaria and Turkey,” March 31, 1942. Picker, p. 59.

²³⁰ Hitler on “Friendship with Turkey,” May 13, 1942. Picker, p. 82.

²³¹ Gerede, pp. 32-33.

Ribbentrop and *Staatssekretär* (Secretary of State) Ernst von Weizsäcker. Gerede told Hitler and attendants that Turkey concluded an alliance with Britain because of its “fragile” geopolitical location. Yet, the only aim of Turkey was to preserve its “national unity,” and it would follow a policy of neutrality. Hitler replied Gerede that regarding the “Polish Question,” his peace endeavors were turned down by Britain. He added that he was acting like Atatürk, and abolished Treaty of Versailles, just as Atatürk did to Sèvres. While praising the Turkish race for being an ally of Germany during the World War I, Hitler also commented that Turkey was currently a “weak state.”²³²

For Germans, the neutrality of Turkey was essential before the attack against the Soviet Union. This was the main reason behind the non-aggression pact between Ankara and Berlin, signed on June 18, 1941, just four days before the German attack on the Soviet Union.²³³ According to Hitler, Germany could provide Turkey with weapons in return for the closure of the Turkish Straits. By doing this, Germans wanted to gain the advantage of not having to defend the Straits on their own.²³⁴

To draw Turkey on its side, Germany followed a policy on three levels: first, Stalin’s demands and the Soviet threat on Turkish Straits were to be brought to the agenda. Second, pan-Turkist (Turanian) movements were to be supported both politically and financially. Third, some of the Aegean Islands were to be offered to Turkey. Turkey proposed mediation in Iraq as well on May 6, 1941, which was refused.²³⁵ Hitler stated that von Papen should be cautious with the promises

²³² Gerede, pp. 32-33.

²³³ According to Article III, this Pact would be valid for ten years after the signing. Schramm, p. 1212. For details, see, Gerede, pp. 210-214.

²³⁴ Hitler on “Bulgaria and Turkey,” March 31, 1942. Picker, p. 59.

²³⁵ Schramm, p. 392.

Germany was about to give to Turkey, even when Hitler had been ready to some concessions.²³⁶

The German support to pan-Turkism would have some reflections on the visits of the Turkish generals, Ali Fuat Erden, and Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir Erkilet, to Germany, which was also important for the Turkic people in the German POW camps at that time. However, according to historian Eduard Abramian, while supporting Turanism in Turkey, Germans were negotiating at the same time with the Georgians and Armenians. The main agenda of those negotiations was a possible invasion of Turkey by the German-intended Armenian and Georgian states in the future with the help of a German led operation.²³⁷

Rosenberg's notes also confirmed this point. At a discussion on May 8, 1942, when Hitler asked Rosenberg about his views on Armenia, Rosenberg found the chance to express his thoughts. According to him, Armenia was a buffer between Turkey and Azerbaijan, "and thus could stop a Pan-Turanian movement towards the East."²³⁸

²³⁶ Hitler on "Oil of Caucasus," May 9, 1942, Picker, p. 81.

²³⁷ Abramian further notes that the preparations for the invasion of Turkey were interrupted because of the advance of the Red Army into Caucasus at the beginning of the year 1943. Eduard Abramian, *Forgotten Legion: Sondervverbände Bergmann in World War II, 1941-1945* (New York: Europa Books, 2007), p. 12.

²³⁸ Document No. 1520-PS, "Notes about a discussion with the Führer at the Führer Headquarters," May 8, 1942, the Avalon Project.

CHAPTER V

THE WORLD WAR II AND THE PRISONERS-OF-WAR

5.1 The German Attack on the Soviet Union

The plans for the massive German attack against the Soviet Union were codenamed Fall Barbarossa (Operation Barbarossa) by Germans. Hitler was planning to crush the Soviet Union in three to six months.²³⁹ He gained overconfidence in himself and the German Army after the rapid and crushing victory against France and Poland. On February 3, 1941, Hitler approved the final version of the Operation Barbarossa.²⁴⁰

A plan, codenamed “Oldenburg” was prepared by Hermann Wilhelm Göring. This was the economic plan for the Operation Barbarossa. Accordingly, the continuation of the war on the Eastern Front was only possible, if by the third year of the campaign the German troops were to be fed by the agricultural activities on the Soviet soil. Further, if Germans take the necessary resources out of the country to feed their armies, millions of people would starve to death.²⁴¹ However, Hitler ordered in June 1941, “the immediate and highest possible exploitation of the

²³⁹ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 45.

²⁴⁰ The Fall Barbarossa was initiated by Stellvertreter des Generalstabschefs (Deputy Chief of Staff) Friedrich Paulus and developed by General of Artillery Franz Halder. Detailed schedule of the operation was finished by Chief of the OKW Wilhelm Keitel on June 6, 1941. *The Meridian Encyclopedia of the Second World War*, p. 145.

²⁴¹ *The Meridian Encyclopedia of the Second World War*, p. 146.

occupied territories in favor of Germany” should be provided, especially “in the realm of food and mineral oil economy.”²⁴²

On June 22, 1941, at 3 a.m., the German invasion of the Soviet Union began. The attack was planned to be conducted by three army groups. First was the *Heeresgruppe Süd* (Army Group South), commanded by Gerd von Rundstedt, the oldest officer of the Wehrmacht in the World War II. Second army group was the *Heeresgruppe Mitte* (Army Group Center), led by Feodor von Bock. The third army group was Wilhelm von Leeb’s *Heeresgruppe Nord* (Army Group North).²⁴³

The formations of the Waffen-SS were also included in the vast invasion plan: The *Leibstandarte SS “Adolf Hitler”* and *SS Division “Viking”* were marching into the Soviet soil with the Army Group South; the *SS Division “Reich”* joined to the Army Group Center; and the *SS Totenkopfdivision* and *SS Polizeidivision* was together with Army Group North. In Finland, the *SS Kampfgruppe “Nord”* and 9th *SS Infantry Regiment* were stationed under Norwegian Army Command, led by General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst.²⁴⁴

The attack was planned to be a surprise on the Red Army. Documents proved that the Wehrmacht achieved this aim at the earlier days of the attacks. The Russians showed only a weak resistance on the first days of the battles, while Germans progressed four to five kilometers into the Soviet soil within hours.²⁴⁵ The

²⁴² Document No. 1743-PS, “Guiding Principles for the Economic operations in the newly occupied Eastern territories” (the Green Portfolio) Printed at the Armed Forces High Command (OKW) in Berlin, June 1941.

²⁴³ The *Heeresgruppe Süd* was consisted of fifty two infantry divisions (including also the Romanian Third and Fourth Armies, two Hungarian divisions, and an Italian corps); the *Heeresgruppe Mitte* was consisted of forty two infantry divisions; the *Heeresgruppe Nord* was consisted of three Panzer and seven infantry divisions. Bryan Perrett and Ian Hogg, *Encyclopedia of the Second World War* (Essex: Longman, 1989), p. 45.

²⁴⁴ Stein, p. 120.

²⁴⁵ Schramm, “Kriegstagebuch der Operations-Abteilung des GenStdH,” p. 417. All entries in this part of diary were recorded by General Major A. Heusinger, the Chief of the operation battalion.

German Army progressed with incredible speed in the first four weeks. The Army Group North reached to a point nearly 130 kilometers south of Leningrad by July 10. The Army Group Center was doing well too: it invaded Smolensk and came to 320 kilometers to the capital, Moscow. By the way, the Army Group Center took five hundred thousand Soviet soldiers as POWs. The Army Group South was the slowest among the three because of the strong resistance in the Ukraine.²⁴⁶ With the vast encirclement movements, the Wehrmacht captured enormous numbers of the Red Army soldiers.²⁴⁷

Hitler set Crimea as the “cornerstone” of the Eastern Front and attached this peninsula a special importance.²⁴⁸ When Germans arrived to Crimea, the *Reichsführer-SS* (SS-High Command) ordered the evacuation of Crimea in July 2, 1942.²⁴⁹ Hitler wanted only Russians and Ukrainians to be evacuated. Tatars, Bulgars, Greeks, Armenians and other Turkic peoples were excluded from this order, as long as they did not belong to “active Bolshevik elements.”²⁵⁰

When Germans entered to the lands, where the Kalmuk people lived, “they permitted religious holidays and customs to be held publicly and festively.”²⁵¹ The

²⁴⁶ Donald D. Wall, *Nazi Germany and World War II*, Second Edition (Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2003), p. 176; Also see Schramm for detailed information on the resistance on the southern Russia.

²⁴⁷ According to the documents recorded by Operations-Abteilung des GenStdH (Operation Battalion of the General Staff of the Army), the German Army lost 1,122,812 men (of them 36,035 were officers) including wounded and missing, between June 22, 1941 and March 20, 1942. In the same time period, they captured 3,461,338 Red Army soldiers. See, Schramm, p. 489. Between September 11, 1941 and September 26, 1941, the Army Group South of the German Army captured 492,885 men; the Army Group Center captured 172,327 men; in total 665,212 men. See, Schramm, p. 661.

²⁴⁸ *Der Führer und Oberste Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht*, October 22, 1943. Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, Washington: National Archives (NA hereafter), Microcopy, T-175/122/2647408.

²⁴⁹ From *Der Reichsführer-SS, Persönlicher Stab* to Chef der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, *Höheren-SS- und Polizeiführer Ukraine, SS- und Polizeiführer Krim*. July 2/3, 1942. T-175/122/2647916.

²⁵⁰ Order of the Chef der Oberkommando der Wehrmacht “Aussiedlung aus der Krim,” July 12, 1942. NA, T-175/122/2647916.

²⁵¹ The memoirs of a Kalmuk living in Rostov. See, Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 15, The Harvard

people also could “hold regional conferences on a religious basis.”²⁵² The people hoped that Germans would abolish the kolkhoz system. However, they failed to divide the collective farms and work in the kolkhoz was as much as before. The products of the farms were to be returned to Germans.²⁵³

When German Army arrived, the members of the NKVD and Bolshevik Party escaped from them. Most of them joined the partisan forces. The local population, on the other hand, remained.²⁵⁴

5.1.1 The Situation in Central Asia

Reactions to the German attacks could be observed in Turkestan beginning from the very day when German attacks on the Soviet Union began. On June 22-23, 1941, meetings were held in major cities of Turkestan, such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Andijan, Namangan, Fergana, and Nukus. In the first days of the Russo-German battles, several thousand people were conscripted to army.²⁵⁵ The numbers of the Turkestani peoples, who included in the war, were enormous. Only from Uzbekistan, nearly one and a half million people mobilized.²⁵⁶ According to Baymirza Hayit, the total number of the mobilized Turkestanis reached to nearly two millions.²⁵⁷ Cebbar Ertürk, a POW from Azerbaijan, claimed that the Russians

Project, p. 1.

²⁵² Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 15, The Harvard Project, p. 1.

²⁵³ Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 15, The Harvard Project, p. 1.

²⁵⁴ Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 27, The Harvard Project, p. 2

²⁵⁵ Uzbekistan Respublikasi Prezidenti Huzurudagi Devlet ve Cemiyet Kurilişi Akademiyasi, Uzbekistanning Yangi Tarihi Merkezi, *Uzbekistanning Yangi Tarihi, İkinci Kitab: Uzbekistan Sovyet Mustamlakaçılığı Davrida* (Tashkent: Şark Neşriyat, 2000), p. 436.

²⁵⁶ According to the recent archival works, the exact number provided by the official Uzbek sources was 1,433,230 people, which corresponded to the 22 per cent of the whole population. See, *Uzbekistanning Yangi Tarihi*, pp. 463-464.

²⁵⁷ Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens*, p. 103.

brought more than five million people from Turkestan under arms during the World War II.²⁵⁸

In Uzbekistan, jewelry, money and other valuable material were collected from people in order to give material support to the Red Army.²⁵⁹ Compulsory service was imposed on the workers and civil servants. Working hours were extended to eleven hours a day and annual leaves canceled.²⁶⁰ The industry of Central Asia was subordinated to Red Army, leading to an increase in the number of the workers during the war.

When Germans invaded the western territories of the Soviet Union, millions of people were forced to immigrate to the Central Asian republics, which were far from the German aggression. Uzbekistan alone received over a million emigrants.²⁶¹

The nationality issue in the Soviet Union had some reflections at the beginning of the World War II. Before the war, there were “national military units” in the Red Army. For instance, as Hüseyin İkrām Han²⁶² noted, there were military zones of “Turkestan” and “Central Asia.” At the beginning of the war, the “national units” fought under commanders from their own nationalities against the German armies in various fronts. After a few months Stalin disbanded them and established

²⁵⁸ Cebbar Ertürk was responsible for the cultural affairs of the Azerbaijan National Committee. Cebbar Ertürk, *Anayurtta Unutulan Türklük*, 2nd ed., (Kayseri: Zafer, 1956), pp. 142-143.

²⁵⁹ *Uzbekistanning Yangi Tarihi*, p. 437.

²⁶⁰ *Uzbekistanning Yangi Tarihi*, p. 440.

²⁶¹ *Uzbekistanning Yangi Tarihi*, p. 454.

²⁶² İkrām Han fulfilled his master’s degree in Tashkent Law Institute and became director of the Law School there, at the same time giving Civil Law lectures before being called to military service. See İkrām Han, p. 13. After joining to the Red Army, he was sent to Rostov for a three-months officer training and made a member of the *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza - KPSS* (The Communist Party of the Soviet Union). He was graduated as second lieutenant from Rostov. See, İkrām Han, p. 53.

mixed units.²⁶³ He might have thought that by doing this, a sense of “unity” would emerge among the soldiers of the Red Army.

The units, according to the accounts of the soldiers fought in them, were poorly trained and armed. With the beginning of the war, students, who completed higher schools, sent to military schools in order to fulfill the need for officers. Many soldiers had no rifles at all. The national troops were set under Russian commanders.²⁶⁴

5.2 Soviet Prisoners-of-War (POWs)

As stated above, the poorly trained Red Army units could not resist against the attacking German Army and many soldiers of fell into German captivity. The enormous numbers of these POWs were sent to various POW camps, most of which were in Poland and the Ukraine.

The POWs held by the Germans had a hierarchy. On top of this hierarchy were the British, the US and the Northern European POWs. Below came the Southeastern Europeans. Even those were sorted among themselves. For instance, there was an OKW order instructing that the Greek POWs had to be treated better, while the Serbs deliberately worse. On the bottom of the hierarchy laid the Jews, the Soviet citizens and the Poles. This hierarchy did not reflect only the “rank of the races” in German mind; it also had a pragmatic meaning. As an example, the British

²⁶³ Hüseyin İkrâm Han, *Bir Türkistanlının İkinci Dünya Savaşı Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Bedir, 1999), p. 57.

²⁶⁴ Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 160, The Harvard Project, p. 14.

simply had too many German POWs in hand, thus Germans had to treat them better because of the fear of reciprocity.²⁶⁵

Germans divided the responsibility for the POWs during the war at the Eastern Front between OKW (High Command of the Armed Forces) and OKH (High Command of the Army). In the operation areas, OKH held the responsibility, while in the homeland, Generalgouvernement and in the planned Reichskommissariats (Reich Commissariats), the OKW. For the Soviet POWs, the area of responsibility of the OKH was more significant. In the OKH area, “take-over (to OKW) centers” at the eastern border of the East Prussia and Generalgouvernement, admission camps in the inner parts of this area, and “POW – soldier admission camps”²⁶⁶ and “POW – officer admission camps”²⁶⁷ in the remaining nineteen areas were ordered to be established.²⁶⁸ These plans were of crucial importance for the fate of the Red Army POWs, both Russian and non-Russian. Germans took much more POWs than they anticipated during the course of war. This contributed negatively to the difficult and inhumane conditions in these POW camps.

The vast numbers of Soviet POWs captured during the Operation Barbarossa became especially important for the German politicians because of the official enmity between the ideologies of the Soviet Union and Germany. The special instructions, dating October 8, 1941, were issued regarding the Soviet POWs. According to these, when treating the Soviet soldiers, “any indulgence or even

²⁶⁵ Streit, pp. 69-70.

²⁶⁶ Kriegsgefangenen-Mannschaftsstellagern or Stalags.

²⁶⁷ Kriegsgefangenen-Offizierlagern or Oflag

²⁶⁸ For the officers, 30,000 – 50,000 places were foreseen. There were 790,000 places overall for the whole POWs for the former Red Army soldiers. See, Streit, p. 73.

friendly disposition” were strictly forbidden. With Soviet POWs, the “use of arms should be severe.”²⁶⁹

The mortality rates at the POW camps were enormous. Dr. Werner Mansfeld, the Head of the Enterprise Group “Forced Labor” in Four-Year Plan,²⁷⁰ stated at a seminar held in the Reichswirtschaftskammer (Reich Chamber of Commerce), by February 19, 1942, from 3.9 million Russians, only 1.1 million survived. From November 1941 until January 1942 alone, five hundred thousand Soviet POWs were already dead.²⁷¹ Another specific example would be that from September 1941 until April 1942, in the Częstochowa²⁷² POW camp in Poland from ninety thousand Soviet prisoners of war, only three thousand survived.²⁷³ General Karl Kitzinger²⁷⁴ reported to Rosenberg that in the first months of the German attack against the Soviet Union some 2,500 prisoners died daily in Reichskommissariat Ukraine.²⁷⁵

For the advance towards the East, the German Army High Command set three zones in accordance with the plans of Ostministerium: first was the “operation zone,” second the “Commissariats of Ostland, the Ukraine and Generalgouvernement” and third the Reichsgebiet (Reich Zone). In the first months of the Operation Barbarossa, in the “operation zone” under the responsibility of

²⁶⁹ Document No. 1519-PS, The National Socialist German Workers Party, Party Chancellery, Führer Headquarters, Circular No. 21/41. Subject: Treatment of Soviet Prisoners of War, the Avalon Project.

²⁷⁰ Ministerialdirektor Mansfeld was the Leiter der Geschäftsgruppe Arbeitseinsatz im Vierjahresplan.

²⁷¹ Streit, p. 128.

²⁷² Częstochowa is a city in the South of today’s Poland.

²⁷³ G. N. Vzvarova, “Turkestanskii Legionery,” *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (vol. 2, 1995), p. 40.

²⁷⁴ Karl Kitzinger was General der Flieger (lit. General of Flyers, a rank between Generaloberst and Generalleutnant) and Wehrmachtbefehlshaber in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine in the World War II.

²⁷⁵ Document No. 1517-PS, the Avalon Project. The date of the document was December 14, 1941. Rosenberg, who cited from Kitzinger, should have been informed by Kitzinger before this date.

OKH, mortality rates were enormous.²⁷⁶ No exact data of total mortality in the “Commissariats of Ostland and the Ukraine” exists, which was under OKW responsibility. However, the numbers were estimated to be still very high, while the highest numbers were seen in the Generalgouvernement.²⁷⁷

The situation in the Reichsgebiet under OKW responsibility was a little different. A report concerning the Stalag 318 in Lamsdorf²⁷⁸ indicated that since the end of July, “the POWs dug holes in the earth, where they stay at night. The nutrition was not much but enough.”²⁷⁹ The POWs were given breakfast, lunch and dinner.²⁸⁰ However, it was stated in the report that “for these Untermenschen, it was far from enough. It could be observed that in the first weeks, they ate grass, flowers and raw potatoes like animals.”²⁸¹ When the POWs could not find anything to eat on the field, according to the same report, they began eating humans.²⁸² Since Stalin had not signed the Geneva Protocol, the prisoners were not aided by any international humanitarian organization.

The instructions regarding the Soviet POWs required the separation of the “racial Germans, Ukrainians, White Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Rumanians, Finns, Georgians” from the ethnic Russians. Furthermore, the racial Germans, Ukrainians, White Russians, Latvians, Estonians, Rumanians,

²⁷⁶ In December 1941, in the whole Operationsgebiet (operation zone) 89,693 POWs were dead. This number corresponds to 15.4 per cent of the total POWs there. In the following months, respectively, 87,451 (19.4 per cent); 46,579 (13.2 per cent); 31,703 (9.4 per cent); 19,535 (5.8 per cent) of total POWs in the Operationsgebiet were dead. See Streit, p. 133.

²⁷⁷ In the Generalgouvernement, only for which exact numbers are in hand, 290,650 POWs in total were dead between June 1941 and April 1942. Nearly 85.7 per cent of the total POWs in this zone were killed or dead. This was the highest mortality rate observed in the Eastern Front. See, Streit, p. 134.

²⁷⁸ Lamsdorf (Polish: Łambinowice) is a city in the south-west of today's Poland.

²⁷⁹ Streit, p. 135.

²⁸⁰ At the breakfast, the POWs received hot coffee. At lunch, they got one-plate dishes, and for dinner Kommissbrot (one bread for five men). Streit, p. 135.

²⁸¹ Streit, p. 135.

²⁸² Streit, p. 135.

Lithuanians, Finns” were to be sent home as soon as possible.²⁸³ As early as September 1941, German authorities fulfilled these instructions and began releasing Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian POWs.²⁸⁴

5.2.1 Mortality in the German Prisoners-of-War Camps

A general evaluation is necessary regarding the high mortality rates in the German POW camps. First of all, it can be said that the German Army High Command, parallel to the official race ideology of the Nazi party, officially ordered that the Soviet and Asiatic POWs to be treated deliberately bad. In practice, these orders were fulfilled. This was an important ingredient in the high mortality of the Soviet and Central Asian POWs.

Secondly, huge territories of the Soviet Union made transportation of the POWs incredibly troublesome. The POWs had to be transported, as mentioned above, to very long distances for take-over. Weeks-long walks exhausted them. Many POWs died during long walks. However, insufficient nutrition, early winter and epidemic diseases increased the mortality numbers considerably.

5.3 Turkic Prisoners-of-War

While Germans treated the Soviet and Turkic POWs deliberately and systematically worse, the German high command was concerned about the German propaganda in the occupied Soviet territory. The propaganda was regarded as a crucial element to win the residents’ “hearts.”

²⁸³ Document No. 1519-PS, The National Socialist German Workers Party, Party Chancellery, Führer Headquarters, Circular No. 21/41. Subject: Treatment of Soviet Prisoners of War, the Avalon Project.

²⁸⁴ Crane, p. 89.

On November 10, 1942, the “Propaganda Department”²⁸⁵ of the German Army directed how propaganda in the areas near the front to be conducted. According to these, the propaganda should be that “it is not Germany’s desire that the POWs die because of hunger, or they did not intend to force them work. All responsibility was held by Moscow. Stalin gave the criminal order that the food stock, production and transport material were to be destroyed in the occupied lands. The countrymen of the POWs fulfilled these orders.”²⁸⁶

The stormy German attacks on the Red Army caused many Soviet troops lose most of their personnel. Desperate and without commanders, some officers and soldiers tried to save their lives and escape from the front. The Soviet High Command, thereafter, established special units, named *zagryadytelny otryad* (literally “loading squadron”), to cut the ways of the escaping soldiers and officers and force them to fight.²⁸⁷

According to Ertürk, the weapons of the Germans threatened the Turkestani soldiers in front of them, while they were threatened from backward by the weapons of the Russians. Therefore, when they found a chance, the Turks (i.e. Turkestanis and Azerbaijanis) were killing their Russian officers and moving to the German side.²⁸⁸ Some Russian authors wrote that this was an overstatement.

In some German POW camps, every day five to ten people were dying because of diseases or starvation. As one of the POWs, Musa Ramazan, wrote in his memoirs, special units of nearly thousand prisoners were employed only for digging

²⁸⁵ *Die Abteilung Wehrmactspropaganda im Wehrmactsführungsstab.*

²⁸⁶ Streit, p. 128.

²⁸⁷ İkrām Han, p. 36.

²⁸⁸ Ertürk, pp. 142-143.

mass graves.²⁸⁹ Veli Kayyum Han also reports about the inhumane conditions in the POW camps. In his visit to Sudauen camp, he witnessed approximately thirty to forty thousand Turkestanis, between the ages of fifteen and sixty, who were unnourished and exhausted. They were dying of hunger and epidemic. He also went to Ebenrode and other POW camps, where the situation was worse.²⁹⁰

Some soldiers, especially non-Russians, were hostile to their officers in the Red Army. After falling into German captivity, officers and privates of the Red Army were transported in the same carriage to another camp. Some of the privates found the chance to express their dislike to their former commanders and even fought with them.²⁹¹

Hitler did not only think of the propaganda opportunity he could achieve using the POWs against Stalin, but also the necessity of Germany's preservation of its good relations with Turkey. As will be discussed below, with the help of suggestions and pressures from Turkish authorities and diplomats, the conditions of the Turkic POWs became relatively better in the course of the war. Also, endeavors of some Germans saved many Turkic people's lives in the POW camps.

Prof. Gerhard von Mende visited the Siedlce POW camp near Warsaw. He saw about seven hundred POWs, who were separated from the others for execution. These were educated Turkic people; most of them were teachers, engineers, doctors,

²⁸⁹ Musa Ramazan, *Bir Kafkas Göçmeninin Anıları* (Ankara: Kafkas Derneği, 2001), pp. 44-45. Musa Ramazan met with Ali Şahan, a member of North Caucasus National Committee from Berlin, in Proskurov POW camp in November 1942. Şahan helped him go out of the camp. Later on, he was sent to Proskurov for ideological education, but by then, the Germans had already lost the war. See, Ramazan, pp. 49-66.

²⁹⁰ Veli Kayyum Han, "Mustafa Caqajni Eslas [Mustafa Çokaynı Eslaş] (Hatıra Daftardan)," *Millij Türkistan* (March 1951, year 2(6), No: 70/71), p. 24.

²⁹¹ İkrâm Han, p. 84.

etc. Von Mende could only rescue these POWs from being murdered by contacting the Abwehr, the German Intelligence Service.²⁹²

5.4 Turkey and the Turkic Prisoners-of War

Hitler wanted the *Auswärtiges Amt* not to get into disagreement with Turkey. Besides, Berlin signed a treaty of friendship with Ankara, just before the German attack on the Soviet Union.²⁹³ For the German Foreign Ministry, the neutrality of Turkey during the war was crucial. Thus, the relations with Turkey in this period were tried to be conducted in a “soft” manner. The Germans planned no attack on Turkey. The visit of the Turkish generals Erkilet and Erden to Berlin influenced the German attitude towards the Turkic POWs in a positive manner. Some German diplomats and soldiers thought that they should treat the Turkic POWs better.

In August 1941, when Hüsrev Gerede was introducing the new *müsteşar* (undersecretary) Kemal Nejat to Captain Richard von Weizsäcker, he expressed his pleasure of the German victories in the battles in the Soviet Union. In this meeting, Gerede briefed Weizsäcker about the Muslims in Russia using a map. Personally, he thought that Germans should benefit from the Muslim POWs. Also, the Caucasian states might be united to create a “buffer.” An independent Turkestan and a Mongol state could be established. Weizsäcker quoted about this interview to Ribbentrop in detail.²⁹⁴

²⁹² Von zur Mühlen, p. 42.

²⁹³ Dallin, p. 232.

²⁹⁴ Gerede, p. 252.

At about the same days, when the first volunteer formations were coming into existence, a retired general and an army commander in duty from Turkey, Ali Fuat Erden and Hüseyin Hüsni Emir Erkilet, respectively, were visiting the Eastern Front. Especially Emir Erkilet was overly sympathetic to Germans and to Hitler in person. In his memoirs, he admiringly tells about the German cities, German Wehrmacht and army movements. He found the chance to talk to the first Turkestani troops on October 26, 1941.²⁹⁵ As Ülküsal reports in his memoirs, Hitler told Erkilet that the aim of Russo-German battles was not only to destroy Bolshevism, but also the Russianness as whole.²⁹⁶

Erkilet visited a Muslim battalion²⁹⁷ commanded by Russian officers. During his visit, the Turkestani soldiers complained to him about the tough living standards in the camps, about their poor health and about the beatings of the Russian superiors.²⁹⁸ They definitely disliked the presence of the Russian rank officers and wanted to get rid of them.

According to Gerhard von Mende, the visit of the Turkish generals had considerable influence on the German officials in the establishment of the first volunteer troops from the Soviet POWs (Osttruppen). Von Mende further stated in his accounts that the visitors proposed Germans to form a “Turco-Islamic Legion,” like they had done in the World War I in Wünsdorf. However, their demand was not fulfilled, since the Nazis were building separate regiments for each and every Caucasian and Turkic nation.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ H. Emir Erkilet, *Şark Cebhesinde Gördüklerimiz* (İstanbul: Hilmi, 1943), pp. 198-199.

²⁹⁶ Ülküsal, pp. 292-293.

²⁹⁷ This battalion was composed of 292 people.

²⁹⁸ Erkilet, pp. 198-199.

²⁹⁹ Von Mende, p. 25; Despite Von Mende’s words, Erkilet does not mention anything in his memoirs about the formation of the Osttruppen, when writing about his talk with Adolf Hitler. See Erkilet, pp. 216-228.

5.4.1 Conditions of the Turkic Prisoners-of-War

Contrary to the common knowledge, most but not all of the Turkic POWs were living under inhumane conditions compared to other POWs held by Germans during the World War II. The conditions depended on time and the camps, where they stayed. Sometimes they could not find even water to drink, but sometimes they got chocolate after lunch. Examples from some of the few German POW camps are provided in the following paragraphs for a better understanding of the situation of the Turkic POWs.

In the first months of the Operation Barbarossa, the SS units killed many Turkic Red Army soldiers, on the ground that they were “Jews”³⁰⁰ and “Asiatic peoples.” Furthermore, many of the Turkic POWs died because of hunger, diseases and exhaustion in the camps at the earlier stages of the Operation Barbarossa. With the proposal of the Ostministerium, special camps for the members of the minority peoples³⁰¹ were established.³⁰² The Turkic POWs were separated from the Russians and sent to these camps in various locations in the Ukraine and Poland.

As İkrām Han quotes, on June 30, 1942, there was no food in his first day at the camp near to Voroshilovgrad.³⁰³ The POWs got only water to drink, which was far from enough. Furthermore, they did not have enough food for days. However, this was a small-sized camp, where the POWs were held only temporarily. Russian-

³⁰⁰ Both Jews and Muslims were circumcised. During the examinations, Germans saw that some of the Turkestanis, who they believed to be Jews, were circumcised. Incidents had been told that German SS troops killed “mistakenly” many Muslims for this reason. See, for example, the memoirs of the Uzbek Isakjan Narzikul in Crane, p. 75 and of the Uzbek Ergash Shermet in Crane, p. 88.

³⁰¹ *Sonderlager für Angehörige von Minderheitvölkern.*

³⁰² Neulen, p. 325.

³⁰³ Today's Luhansk in the eastern Ukraine.

speaking interpreters, being most probably POWs as well, ensured the communication between POWs and German officers.³⁰⁴

At a larger camp in Svatová,³⁰⁵ to where POWs were brought from the other small-sized camps, the former Red Army soldiers were sorted according to their nationalities immediately. Afterwards, the non-Russians were divided into thirty-man groups and were assigned a commander from their own nationalities. The task of the commander was the allocation of the food and reporting serious health problems to the camp management, if necessary. At the Svatová camp, the POWs received regular breakfast, lunch and dinner.³⁰⁶

In the Józef Piłsudski camp³⁰⁷ in Poland in July 1942, tea was ready whole day for the POWs and the group commanders even got three cigarettes daily. At lunch, the soldiers got only boiled potatoes, which they called balanda (blurry). For dinner, they got 300-350 grams of bread with tea.³⁰⁸

The healths of the POWs were not ignored completely as well. Medics and nurses handled wounded or sick ones, if possible. The ones suffering serious illness were sent to military hospitals. If the POWs were wounded during the battles, they were first examined and received medical attention before they sent to the camps.³⁰⁹

After being separated from the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian POWs, some Turkic POWs could get chocolate, bread, water and cigarettes. They were

³⁰⁴ İkrām Han, pp. 71-86.

³⁰⁵ Svatová is in the East of today's Latvia.

³⁰⁶ İkrām Han, pp. 71-86.

³⁰⁷ The camp had been a Polish military post before, named after Józef Klemens Piłsudski, the leader of the Second Polish Republic.

³⁰⁸ İkrām Han, pp. 71-86.

³⁰⁹ İkrām Han, p. 91; Crane, p. 76.

even permitted to have bath and given new German uniforms.³¹⁰ These happened with endeavors of Veli Kayyum Han and POW commissions.

However, it was the fact that as Thorwald notes, the Commission of Veli Kayyum Han saw that the German SD troops killed thousands of Turkic POWs because of their Asiatic appearance. Also, many of them died of hunger and typhus.³¹¹

³¹⁰ İkrām Han, p. 111.

³¹¹ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 90-91.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOVIET LEGIONNAIRES IN THE GERMAN ARMY

6.1 From POWs to Workers in the German Army

The attack of Hitler on the Soviet Union brought together many Russian, Ukrainian, Caucasian, Turkish and Tatar émigrés' appeals for collaboration with Germans against their common enemy. From the beginning of the German invasion of the Soviet Union on they wanted to side with Germans against the Soviet Union. Despite numerous attempts, Germans did not accept them to fight under the Wehrmacht.³¹² The reason for this was, Germans thought, that the return of the émigrés to the Russian soil might cause disturbance among the Soviet citizens, which could possibly increase their zeal to resistance.³¹³ General Ernst Köstring's words on the goals of Hitler's operation in the east are useful for better understanding of the Nazi policies concerning the Soviet people. He believed that the "eastern campaign was being waged against both the Soviet Union as a political entity and the Soviet people."³¹⁴

When the issue came to the POWs, various motivations involved in the issue and the Soviet POWs were treated in accordance with the national socialist politics. The instructions of October 8, 1941 regarding the Soviet POWs made this point clear. "Apart from directing [POWs] into camps according to their nationality," the

³¹² Von zur Mühlen, p. 52.

³¹³ Von zur Mühlen, p. 52.

³¹⁴ Samuel J. Newland, *Cossacks in the German Army 1941-1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 53-54.

POWs, including also members of racial groups, and “any civilians in the camps are to be divided” in three groups. These were: “those politically undesirable, those politically harmless, and those especially reliable in the political sense.” The last group of POWs could be used in the construction and some other works in the occupied areas.³¹⁵

Some of the POWs worked in the service of the German military forces, while some of them worked in the fields and farms nearby. The working made it possible for them to see the Europe, about which they were told in the Soviet Union to be in misery. The Soviet propaganda claimed that the German farmers and peasants were exploited by the European bourgeoisie. Narzikul was one of the few, who changed his mind after seeing that the life conditions were better than imagined by Soviet citizens in the German farm he worked in.³¹⁶

The first Soviet citizens in the German Army were known as *Hilfswillige* (volunteers). The *Hilfswillige*, or in short *Hiwis*, were serving in the German Army as cooks, drivers, medics, etc. The uniforms they wore were, in the early stages, their own Red Army uniforms with a distinguishing mark on them. After a while, they began wearing German Army’s uniforms; they could only be distinguished with a badge, on which wrote “Im Dienst der Wehrmacht (In the service of the German Army).”³¹⁷ The number of the auxiliary volunteers reached to nearly one

³¹⁵ The chapter “Segregation of civilians and politically undesirable POWs taken during the Eastern campaign” in the Document No. 1519-PS, The National Socialist German Workers Party, Party Chancellery, Führer Headquarters, Circular No. 21/41. Subject: Treatment of Soviet Prisoners of War, the Avalon Project.

³¹⁶ Crane, p. 82. Isakjan Narzikul, born in Jizzakh in Central Asia in 1923, was educated in the Russian schools and graduated from the Tashkent Military School in June 1941. He was commissioned to the Baltic military region and sent to Riga just after graduation. At one of the first attacks of the German Army, he was captured wounded by the Germans, without any contact of and reinforcements from the Red Army headquarters. See, for his memoirs, Crane, pp. ix-71.

³¹⁷ Carlos Caballero Jurado, *Foreign Volunteers of the Wehrmacht 1941-45* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1985), pp. 12-13. See, for the Russian version, Carlos Caballero Jurado and Kevin Lyles, *Inostrannie Dobrovoltsy v Vermahte 1941-1945* (Ast, 2005).

hundred thousand people in a few months.³¹⁸ German commanders used these people “on their own initiative” in various duties.³¹⁹ The idea of using the former Red Army soldiers was not welcomed in the Wehrmacht. But the Ostministerium and the Abwehr supported it.³²⁰

Along with the laborers, the former Red Army personnel were either used as guards for industrial complexes, little towns, railroads, etc., or as “self-defense units” against the partisan activities. The latter more sophisticated units were named Ordnungsdienst (order service), fulfilling police service³²¹ in the occupied regions, and Schutzmannschaften (security teams), fighting against the local partisan forces.³²²

By July 1941, with the influence of Gerhard von Mende, German authorities began detailed and comprehensive works for sorting the POWs according to their nationalities. For this task, special commissions were to be established. The operation was to be conducted under the auspices of the Ministry for the East.³²³

³¹⁸ In the spring of 1942, the number of the Hilfswillige in the German Army reached to 200,000 and by the end of that year their number was near 1,000,000. See, Fischer, p. 45. On the other hand, according to Muñoz, by 1945, the total of the “Eastern Volunteers” in the German service was 748,800. Muñoz’s source depends on a document from the Ostministerium, dated January 25, 1945. This number is the total of the men from the Soviet Union, ready for combat service. Total volunteers, including laborers, were estimated at between 600,000 and 1,400,000 people in 1944. See appendix for details. Antinio J. Muñoz, *Hitler’s Eastern Legions, Vol. 2: The Osttruppen*, 2nd ed., (Bayside: Axis Europa Books, 1997), pp. 5-8.

³¹⁹ Wladyslaw Anders, *Russian Volunteers in Hitler’s Army 1941-1945* (Europe Books, 1996), p. 8; Von Mende, p. 24; Ruzi Nazar was in Ukraine, when the first Hilfswillige battalions had been formed. He also served in this battalion, before commanding in the legion battalion in Proskurov. Nazar states that, these “help battalion” was mainly formed by Ukrainians. See the interview with Ruzi Nazar in Luiza İskenderi, *Türkistan Legionları: Tarihiing Ukilmagan Varakları* (Vagant-Profit Neşrieti, 2007), p. 25.

³²⁰ Von zur Mühlen, p. 53.

³²¹ The members of police forces got salaries as well. They received 30-40 Reichsmarks monthly. See, Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 30.

³²² Muñoz, *Hitler’s Eastern Legions*, p. 11.

³²³ Veli Kayyum Han, “Mustafa Caqajni Eslas...”, p. 24; Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 494; Jürgen Thorwald, *Wenn Sie Verderben Wollen: Bericht des grossen Verrats* (Stuttgart: Steingrüben Verlag, 1952), p. 71.

For the sorting process of Turkestani POWs, Veli Kayyum Han and Mustafa Çokay³²⁴ were brought to Berlin. They were put into above-mentioned commissions. The head of the first commission was an SA commander, Paul Otto Geibel. The commission became known as Geibel Commission.³²⁵ The commission of Kayyum Han and Çokay first went to Oerbke and Bergen-Belsen camps on August 26, 1941.³²⁶ For the İdil-Ural Turks, Ahmet Temir; for the Azerbaijanis Mehmet Togay; and for the North Caucasians Alihan Kantemir were called by the Germans.

The Geibel commission visited Thorn,³²⁷ Prostken,³²⁸ Sudauen,³²⁹ Schirwindt,³³⁰ Metziken, Pogegen³³¹ and Ebenrode³³² POW camps between in September 1941.³³³ Major Mayer-Mader³³⁴ was also in the commission visiting Ebenrode. There, he addressed Turkestani POWs.³³⁵ The third visit of the commission was to the POW camps in Poland and the Ukraine, which were

³²⁴ See below for details.

³²⁵ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, pp. 495-496.

³²⁶ Abdulvahap Kara, *Mustafa Çokay'ın Hayatı ve Orta Asya Türk Cumhuriyetlerinin Bağımsızlığı Yolundaki Mücadelesi*, unpublished PhD. Dissertation, Mimar Sinan University (İstanbul, 2002), pp. 214-215.

³²⁷ Thorn (Polish: Toruń) is a city in the North of today's Poland.

³²⁸ Prostken (Polish: Prostki) is a city in the Northeast of today's Poland.

³²⁹ Suwalken (Polish: Suwałki, bet. 1941-1945 named as Sudauen by Germans) is a city in the Northeast of today's Poland.

³³⁰ The name of the city became Kudirkos Naumiestis, after the name of Lithuanian patriot, Vincas Kudirka, in 1934. Germans named the city Schirwindt. The city is in the West of today's Lithuania.

³³¹ Pogegen (Lithuanian: Pagėgiai) is a city in the West of today's Lithuania.

³³² Ebenrode (Russian Nesterov) is a town in today's Kaliningrad oblast of Russia.

³³³ The date of the visits was from September 6 to September 25, 1941.

³³⁴ Mayer-Mader was the commander of the first Turkestani units in the German Army. In October 1941, he began to establish these units under auspices of Abteilung II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr im OKW (Office for Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Service in the OKW) for special intelligence purposes. See following paragraphs for details.

³³⁵ Isakjan Narzikul quotes that Mayer-Mader told the Turkestani POWs in German that he knows that "the people of Turkestan suffer under dictatorship of Russia," and he was working to make the lives of the Turkestanis better, "with improved facilities." He repeated the same in Uzbek afterwards. Narzikul improved his German language skills in Ebenrode and commissioned therefore by the camp guard, named Max, for giving a report to the visiting commission. After Mayer-Mader, Veli Kayyum Han addressed the POWs, promising them to give "some good news" very soon. See, Crane, p. 90.

Lemberg,³³⁶ Jaroslau,³³⁷ Kochánov,³³⁸ Deba³³⁹ and Samoš.³⁴⁰ Çokay and Veli Kayyum demanded from the authorities to release Turkestani POWs and make them work for Germans.

The Geibel Commission also visited Częstochowa POW camp with a slightly different cadre. Veli Kayyum and Çokay again represented the Turkestanis. Here, the members of the commission were quarantined because of the typhus disease found in the POW camp.³⁴¹

In the course of war, German armed forces had marched deep into the territories of the Soviet Union. Day by day, their need for combat troops increased. Furthermore, partisan resistance started against the Germans. This forced them to look for ways for using the POWs. Thus, despite the position of Hitler on the POWs, some divisions, regiments and even battalions started recruiting informally support and guard units from the Soviet POWs.³⁴²

As time passed by, the realities of the war made it necessary to establish semi-official units from the prisoners of war. Oberkommando der 18. Armee (High Command of the 18th Army) suggested formation of special troops to fight against the above mentioned partisans in the occupied territories. Von Kleist was commissioned for the selection of reliable officers from the Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks' camps. Finally, on October 6, 1941, a unit from Cossack prisoners on

³³⁶ Lemberg (Ukrainian: Lviv) is a city in the West of today's Ukraine.

³³⁷ Jaroslau (Polish: Jarosław) is a town in the Southeast of today's Poland.

³³⁸ Kochánov is a village in today's Czech Republic.

³³⁹ Deba (Polish: Dęba) is a city in today's Poland.

³⁴⁰ Samoš is a village in today's Serbia. Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, pp. 495-496.

³⁴¹ Veli Kayyum Han, "Mustafa Caqajni Eslas..." p. 25.

³⁴² Bishop, p. 69.

trial ordered to be established. This date is considered to be the birthday of the Osttruppen (Eastern troops).³⁴³

By the end of November 1941, POWs in fifteen German POW camps were sorted in accordance with their nationality, age, occupation, education and ranks in the former Red Army.³⁴⁴ There were nearly thirty commissions to sort the prisoners. In total, five to six hundred people worked in these commissions,³⁴⁵ which were, it is understood, “mixed” commissions with members from various nationalities.

The POWs of the Siedlce POW camp were sorted by their nationalities in mid-April, 1942. First, Russians and Ukrainians were separated from the others. Then, Ukrainians were separated from Russians too. The Kazaks, Uzbeks, Tadjiks, Tatars, Kirgizs, Kalmuks were not parted from each other and stayed in the barracks together.³⁴⁶

6.1.1 Recruitment and Volunteering Question

It is obvious that “volunteering” to fight or work in the German Army remained as an ambiguous issue. Officially, the “collaborators,” independent of their motives and voluntariness, were named as “volunteers” by Germans. However, it was not known, whether or not they were forced to work by German soldiers. What is clear was that, according to the memoirs of the various Turkic POWs, they were forced by the tough living standards in the POW camps, namely hunger, disease, weather conditions, etc. The attitude of the Soviet authorities

³⁴³ Spezialtruppe zur *Niederkämpfung der Sowjetrussischen Partisanen*. Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, pp. 20-21.

³⁴⁴ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, pp. 495-496.

³⁴⁵ Von zur Mühlen, p. 53.

³⁴⁶ G. N. Vzvarova, p. 41.

towards the Red Army soldiers was so bad in some cases, that they had to escape and surrendered to Germans.³⁴⁷

From the POWs in the German camps, only a few people had applied for being volunteers in the German Army. For instance, in the above-mentioned Częstochowa POW camp in Poland, only five out of all POWs became volunteers.³⁴⁸

An interesting detail regarding the “volunteering question” was provided by Hüseyin İkrām Han in his memoirs. Soviet troops, including İkrām Han’s unit were defeated by Germans in Donetsk on June 20, 1942 and lost communication with their commanders. After a period of hiding, the whole unit surrendered to Germans, when they understood that they did not have another chance.³⁴⁹ The soldiers were no “volunteers” in this respect, but they surrendered because of the circumstances which forced them to do. German wartime propaganda was also an important factor here. İkrām Han reports in his memoirs that “German propaganda vehicles” announced its calls in Russian language and thereby tried to convince the Soviet soldiers that Germans would be victorious of the war and offered them directly to come to German ranks voluntarily.³⁵⁰ Also, German propaganda leaflets appealed for surrender.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Interview with a Soviet citizen. In his memoirs, this Red Army soldier stated that the NKVD arrived to their village and gathered all men from 18 to 50 years for conscription to the Red Army in 1943. They were “harshly beaten” and put into a “punitive regiment.” Because of the “physical interrogations” and punishment by the NKVD authorities, he switched to German side. Though it can not be clearly understood from the memoirs, this soldier was most probably recruited to the partisan forces by the NKVD, not to the Red Army. Also, it is not known whether or not he was a Russian or non-Russian. See, Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 20, the *Harvard Project*, p. 2.

³⁴⁸ G. N. Vzvarova, p. 40.

³⁴⁹ İkrām Han, p. 71.

³⁵⁰ İkrām Han, p. 62.

³⁵¹ Interview with a former POW at a camp in the Chernihiv region. They were evaluated as “crude and naïve” by this POW. See, Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 27, the *Harvard Project*, p. 3.

The order of Generaloberst (Colonel General) Franz Halder's directive on the Establishment of the Ostlegionen by the Heeresgruppe *Süd* (Army Group South) on June 2, 1942 had been far from resolving this issue. But from the German military point of view, the "volunteering question" was solved, to some degree, by the order of Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, the commander of the 162nd Infantry Division, on July 4, 1942.³⁵² According to these, the Turco-Tatar and Caucasian POWs, which were separated from the rest, were to be sent to Legionssammellagers (Legion Concentration Camps) in Chorol (Khorol) and Lubny. Here, the POWs were to be sorted according their nationalities "with favored care" and medically examined.³⁵³

The guidelines of July 4, 1942 instructed that all the healthy capable men until 28 years³⁵⁴ were to be categorized as Kategorie A. The older and unfit ones were to be sorted as Kategorie B. This second group was to be used as technical workers. They were to be put into reserve companies and work companies.³⁵⁵

Vzvarova quotes, as an example of the application of the orders, three hundred and fifty people were selected from the non-Russian POWs and were sent to Legionowo with the stub code "Kategorie A." The ones, who remained at the POW camp, were codenamed as "Kategorie B." The latter were sent to Legionowo as well in the following days.³⁵⁶

After being placed in the POW camps, some of the former Red Army soldiers were volunteered for the tasks such as harvesting sugar beets outside of the

³⁵² The order carried the title "*Grundlegende Befehl über die Aufstellung von Turk-Bataillonen* (Fundamental Order on the Establishment of Turk-Battalions)." This order was valid for the area of 162nd Infantry Division.

³⁵³ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 88.

³⁵⁴ Since August 1, 1942, until 35 years. For the officers and NCOs, there was no age limit.

³⁵⁵ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, pp. 88-89.

³⁵⁶ G. N. Vzvarova, p. 41.

camps in summertime, however, they avoided from carrying coal and wood to the camp in the freezing winter. Most of them did not have any proper shoes and anything warm to wear.³⁵⁷ On the other hand, the POWs that worked in the baths, kitchens, etc. stayed in separate buildings. That was perceived as a sign of “privilege” by the soldiers and contributed to their application as workers under the German Army.³⁵⁸

6.1.2 Turkestan National Prisoners-of-War Commissions

For the special task of formation of a Turkestan Legion and a Caucasian - Muslim Legion, Aussonderungskommissions (Selection Commissions) were established from January 13, 1942 on. These were to work both under OKW/Allgemeines Wehrmachtamt (General Bureau of the Armed Forces) in OKW POW camps and under OKH/Generalquartiermeister (Quartermaster General³⁵⁹ of the Army) in the OKH POW camps.

In a discussion, Rosenberg reported to Hitler that “for some time,” the Ostministerium’s commissions had “picked out the best of the prisoners” and that the OKW established the “Turkestan Legion through direct collaboration” with his ministry. Rosenberg was informed by Otto Bräutigam, the head of the General Politics department of the Ostministerium, that “the commander [of the Turkestan Legion] has learned the Turkestani language, and the [Turkestanis] have accepted German military terms and have an anti-Bolshevist attitude.”³⁶⁰

Veli Kayyum Han reported to Andican in an interview during his lifetime that he and Mustafa Çokay were not aware of the German plans to establish troops

³⁵⁷ İkrām Han, pp. 89-90.

³⁵⁸ İkrām Han, p. 103.

³⁵⁹ Quartermaster General is the officer in charge of supplies for the army.

³⁶⁰ Document No. 1520-PS, “Notes about a discussion with the Führer at the Führer Headquarters,” May 8, 1942, the Avalon Project.

from the Turkic POWs until the end of 1941. According to Kayyum Han, von Mende called him when he was in Berlin. Von Mende wanted Veli Kayyum to call Mustafa Çokay. He was planning to use Çokay for propaganda in the radio and newspaper.³⁶¹

The Turkestani commissions were assigned to select the suitable-appearing soldiers. The selected ones were to be approved again in this “early stage” by Mayer-Mader or other officers for their suitability. The POWs, whose characters were suitable but not healthy enough, were sent, if possible, to work in service of the German Army. On the other hand, the “politically unreliable” ones were to be sent back to the POW camps.³⁶²

After being separated from the former Red Army soldiers, Turkic POWs were sorted according to their nationalities. The members of the POW commissions asked them, whether or not they wanted to fight against Stalin, or work instead.³⁶³ The sorting criteria were not only nationality. Germans and the POW commissions were picking the educated ones, or the ones who were officers in the Red Army before.³⁶⁴ The latter ones were used mainly for propaganda purposes and for the publications of Turkestanis.

The uniforms worn by the voluntary units and flags of the legions had become an important issue. However, the attempts to regulate the uniforms and badges could not be concluded fully, because these units were not stationed in a certain place. The personnel were derived from various places, therefore their

³⁶¹ Interview with A. Ahat Andican on January 25, 2010.

³⁶² Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, pp. 86-87.

³⁶³ İkrām Han, p. 112.

³⁶⁴ For instance, Veli Kayyum Han asked the POWs in his visit to Ebenrode, if anyone had a university degree. About a dozen people reported. They were given new clothes and then transported to a camp near Luckenwalde. The camp was newly-constructed and the POWs had individual beds and furniture there. See, Crane, p. 90.

uniforms varied. Rosenberg reported to Hitler on May 8, 1942, that a “new flag was created for the Turkestan legion, the half moon was done away with and in its place put bow and arrow.”³⁶⁵ Rosenberg showed the symbols and flags to Hitler for the legions of Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Kuban Cossacks, and Kalmuks. Hitler raised no objections.³⁶⁶

To make a regulation, three different types of collar patches (for Russians and Ukrainians, for Central Asians and Caucasians, and for the Cossacks) and two different types of shoulder straps (for Russians, Ukrainians and Cossacks, and for Central Asians and Caucasians) were planned to be carried by the “volunteers.” Furthermore, an arm-shield and a cockade were foreseen for each and every nationality in the German Army. These insignias were different from the German symbols, because “the honor to carry them” belonged only to the German nationals. Similarly, the medals and decorations designated to honor the soldiers were also planned to be different. In practice, however, German medals were also given to non-Germans in the service of the German Army.³⁶⁷

6.1.3 Cossack Volunteers

Germans treated the Ukraine different than the rest of the Soviet Union. In the Ostministerium, a branch was opened just for this land. According to Rosenberg, the Ukraine would be most important dependency of Germany around Moscow. Furthermore, its grain stocks were crucial for the Germans. Therefore, it must be separated from Russia and set under strict control of Germany.³⁶⁸ Rosenberg

³⁶⁵ Document No. 1520-PS, “Notes about a discussion with the Führer at the Führer Headquarters,” May 8, 1942, the Avalon Project.

³⁶⁶ Document No. 1520-PS, “Notes about a discussion with the Führer at the Führer Headquarters,” May 8, 1942, the Avalon Project. The notes were signed by Alfred Rosenberg, present at the discussion were Reich Minister Dr. Lammers, Bormann and Rosenberg.

³⁶⁷ Jurado, pp. 13-14.

³⁶⁸ Dallin, p. 108.

established close contacts to Ukrainian and Caucasian émigrés in Europe.

One of the first volunteer formations in the German Army were those consisted of the Cossacks in the Ukraine. The Ukrainian volunteers began contacting the Germans well before the Operation Barbarossa. During the Polish Campaign in the spring of 1939, while the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact still in force, the Abwehr contacted the Orhanizatsiya Ukrayinskikh Natsionalistiv (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, or in short, OUN).³⁶⁹ The OUN got the permission from the “Office for Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Service in the OKW”³⁷⁰ to collect west Ukrainian soldiers from the German POW camps.³⁷¹

German intelligence was aiming to provide the aid of the Ukrainian nationalists in their invasion of Poland by unofficially promising them an independent Galicia. The unit created for this end by the Germans was named Bergbauerhilfe (Help of Mountain Peasants). It was consisting of some five hundred to one thousand men. Their commander was a German, Colonel Erwin Stolze. He stated after the war that the Ukrainian volunteers did their jobs well. They underwent sabotage acts behind the front in Poland.³⁷²

Works for a “Ukrainian Legion” also began before the Operation Barbarossa, at the beginning of 1941. This legion would have two battalions, whose names were Roland and Nachtigall. Training was undertaken by the Abwehr. German officers, including Oberländer, assigned to the command post.³⁷³

³⁶⁹ Orhanizatsiya Ukrayinskykh Natsionalistiv founded in 1929 in Poland to oppose the occupation of the Ukraine by Poland and Russia.

³⁷⁰ Abteilung II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr im OKW.

³⁷¹ The OUN was divided into two wings at the Second Congress on February 10, 1940 in Krakow. The more radical wing was under Stefan Bandera, while the other wing was led by Andrij Melnik. See Franz W. Seidler, *Die Kollaboration 1939-1945* (Munich and Berlin: Herbig, 1995) for Stefan Bandera, see Seidler, pp. 55-61; for Andreas Melnik, see Seidler, pp. 371-375.

³⁷² Newland, p. 24.

³⁷³ Muñoz, *Hitler's Eastern Legions*, p. 9.

This was an exceptional situation when one bears in mind that the first volunteer formations of the Slavic peoples corresponded to the time period after the Operation Barbarossa. In the eyes of German political and military leaders, a myth about the courage and resilience of the Cossacks was prevailing. A legitimization according to Nazi ideology was found to overcome this exception: according to this, Cossacks were the descendants of the Germanic tribe of the Ostrogoths, who owned Black Sea region between the second and fifth centuries. Consequently after a while, the Cossack units were promoted to an equal status to the volunteer units formed by Volksdeutsche, the Germanic peoples of the North and West.³⁷⁴

6.2 Vlasov Army and Legions

Andrey Vlasov, a former general in the Soviet Army until being taken as POW by the Germans in July 1942, emerged as the main figure behind the opposition movement of the Russian former Red Army soldiers to the Stalinist regime. However, his political activities, which began in March 1943 with the permission of German authorities, could only continue three months, until being forbidden by Hitler. After the situation at the Eastern Front deteriorated for the Germans in 1944, he was “re-discovered” and contacted by Germans.³⁷⁵

Vlasov founded the Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Armiya (Russian Liberation Army, or in short, ROA) and afterwards Komitet Osvobojdeniya Narodov Rossii (Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, or in short KONR), on November 14, 1944 with the “Prague Manifesto.” Vlasov regarded himself an anti-Stalin and the representative of the whole peoples in the Soviet Union.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Romanko, “Musulmanskije Formirovaniia v Vermahte i Voiskah SS” pp. 83-85.

³⁷⁵ Von Zur Mühlen, p. 160.

³⁷⁶ Von zur Mühlen, p. 161.

Vlasov wanted to gather all the legions from former Red Army soldiers under ROA flag. Also, he opposed the National Turkestan Union Committee in his articles at the newspaper *Volia Naroda* (Will of the People).³⁷⁷ Vlasov's views were in clear opposition to the Turkestan national movement led by Veli Kayyum Han at that time. He favored an absolute centralism.³⁷⁸ The views of Veli Kayyum Han about him were not very favorable. He thought that Vlasov was a "colonialist" and opposing only to the regime in Russia, not to the oppression of the non-Russians in the Soviet Union.³⁷⁹

The SS foresaw the opposition of the non-Russian national representatives and tried to minimize their opposition to Vlasov. For this reason, the SS proposed to the national representatives the establishment of "Eastern Turkic" and "Caucasian" councils.³⁸⁰ Further, the command of the legions and the national SS units were to be given to the committees. Germans were planning, in the long term, to connect these two proposed "councils" to KONR in a "federative structure."³⁸¹

While Vlasov's ideas and plans were strongly opposed by the Turkestanis, the Caucasian leaders also protested his attempts to control all the national movements. Non-Russian leaders would only accept Vlasov as the leader of the fight against Stalin, if his authority was limited to Russian forces.³⁸²

On November 18, 1944, four days after the establishment of the KONR, the representatives of the Tatars, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, North

³⁷⁷ Veli Kayyum Han, "Ruslar Blan Birga...", pp. 4-5.

³⁷⁸ Brockdorff, p. 187.

³⁷⁹ Veli Kayyum Han, "Ruslar Blan Birga...", pp. 4-5.

³⁸⁰ The establishment of a "Turkic council" was cancelled because of the tense relations between Olzscha and Veli Kayyum Han. The "Caucasian Council" was established, on the other hand, in October 1944.

³⁸¹ Von zur Mühlen, p. 161.

³⁸² Antonio J. Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims: Muslim Volunteers in Hitler's Armies, 1941-1945* (Bayside: Europa Books, 2007), p. 57.

Caucasians, Crimean Tatars, Turkestanis and Ukrainians sent a letter to Alfred Rosenberg, presenting themselves as the representatives of their peoples in the Soviet Union. In the letter, the undersigned men stated that they represented more than ninety million people, who would be affected by the decisions of Vlasov.³⁸³ They wrote that they fought against the Russian imperialism for hundreds of years and founded their independent states in 1918. They claimed that the most passive peoples in the fight against Bolshevism during the Civil War were the Russians, while their peoples welcomed the Russo-German battles and sided with Germans from the very first day on.³⁸⁴

The “representatives” in Germany demanded that Vlasov should not be permitted to the candidature of the leadership of the non-Russian peoples’ liberation movements. The reason for this was, according to these “representatives,” that Vlasov and the non-Russian people had different motivations and aims: Vlasov wanted to crush the Stalinist regime in Russia and establish a new “Russian” state within the same boundaries of the Soviet Union, which was unacceptable for them. They openly stated their agreement on not recognizing Vlasov’s statements in the letter. The “representatives” added that the actions of Vlasov would not have any results for the volunteers, workers, and émigrés in Germany.³⁸⁵

Vlasov had also non-Russians in his committee, whose aims were “freedom of the peoples of Russia.” In the letter, the “representatives” warned German authorities that they would not recognize them as representatives of the will of their

³⁸³ Copy of the Letter to Mr. Reichsminister für die besetzten Ostgebiete, Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg, No. 2998, Berlin, November 18, 1944. From the personal archives of Dr. Hakan Kırımlı.

³⁸⁴ Letter to Mr. Alfred Rosenberg, November 18, 1944.

³⁸⁵ Letter to Mr. Alfred Rosenberg, November 18, 1944.

peoples.³⁸⁶ Consequently, “representatives” demanded from Alfred Rosenberg three main things: first, they wanted Germans to hinder any attempts of Vlasov for the leadership of the non-Russian peoples. Second, they demanded Germans to recognize the rights of the non-Russian peoples on individual states and also recognize them as the only representatives of the non-Russians. Third, they wanted to get the permission of establishing their own national formations and take over the political leadership to themselves.³⁸⁷

Vlasov could only find a small number of non-Russians to work with him. The only Turkestanis in his committee were the five opponents of Veli Kayyum Han. They joined to KONR under the leadership of Haris Kanatbay in April 1945 and established the “Turkestan Council.”³⁸⁸

6.3 The Eastern Legions

Beginning from November 15, 1941, formation of divisions from the Turkestani and Caucasian POWs were proposed. Quarter-Master General Ernst Wagner, commander of the Sicherheitsdivision No. 444 (444th Security Division), was named to the commanding post of these units. They were to be brought to the zone of this division, Zaporizhia,³⁸⁹ by first lieutenant Baron von Taube. The first formations of Central Asian and Caucasian peoples in the German Army were officially proposed to be named as Turkestaner Bataillon No. 444 and Kaukasier

³⁸⁶ Letter to Mr. Alfred Rosenberg, November 18, 1944.

³⁸⁷ Letter to Mr. Alfred Rosenberg, November 18, 1944.

³⁸⁸ Von zur Mühlen, p. 166.

³⁸⁹ Zaporizhia is a city in the center-south of today's Ukraine, resting on the banks of Dnieper River.

Bataillon No. 444. The official name of these combined units, as used in the official German documents, was the “811th Infantry Division.”³⁹⁰

As a general rule, the Eastern Battalions, including the Turk[estan]-Battalion were directly attached to a corps using the number of the corps plus 400 as their designated number. Therefore, it is understood that these 444th Battalion had been 44th Corps before. All of these battalions were generally named as Osttruppen (Eastern Troops).³⁹¹

Adiges, Avars, Azerbaijanis, Ossets, Bashkirs, Lezgins, Ingushs, Kabardays, Karachays, Georgians and Dagestanis were included into Caucasian troops, while Kalmuks, Mongols, Tatars, Turkmen, Turks, Uzbeks, Kirgiz, Estonians and Kazaks were included into Turkestani troops. They would have been armed, uniformed, put under German command and deployed between Dnieper Mouth and Perekop in the Crimean Peninsula. Later on, they would be called as Turk-Battalion 444.³⁹²

The above mentioned first formations were not used at the front against the Red Army in action. Instead, they were made up as security teams for border and rear-area security. These armed groups were just “rudely formed” and differed from the Ostlegionen (Eastern Legions), which were to be established after a while.

Since October 1941, “Office for Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Service in the OKW”³⁹³ had experiences with the Turkestanis and Caucasians. At about the

³⁹⁰ Sergei Drobyazko and Andrei Karaschuk, *Vostochnie Legiony i Kazachi Chasti v Vermaakte* (Moscow: Ast, 1999), p. 3; Oleg Valentinovich Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” in Antonio Muñoz, ed., *The East Came West* (New York: Axis Europa Books, 2001), p. 47; Carlos Caballero Jurado and Kevin Lyles, *Inostrannie Dobrovotsy v Vermaakte* (Moscow: Ast, 2005), p. 24.

³⁹¹ Bishop, p. 70.

³⁹² Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 26.

³⁹³ Abteilung II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr im OKW.

same time, when the Turkestani troops were in formation, under auspices of this office, one Turco-Tatar and one Caucasian army group was formed for special defense purposes and put under the command of two commanders: the Turco-Tatar group was under the command of Major Andreas Mayer-Mader and the Caucasian group under First Lieutenant Oberländer.³⁹⁴ These two units were used for anti-partisan warfare since 1942 under the name Turkestanisches Infantriebataillon 450 (450th Turkestani Infantry Battalion).³⁹⁵ First, in October 1941, 700 POWs were selected in Poltava. They were trained in Silesia. Afterwards, the number of the personnel in this unit became 2,900. In the spring of 1942, this unit was sent to front under the command of Theodor Oberländer.³⁹⁶

Mayer-Mader was the military consultant of Chiang Kai-Sek.³⁹⁷ He knew Turkestan and some Turkestani languages well. His political stance was in favor to the Turkestani nationalism: he was aiming to separate Central Asia from the rest of the Soviet Union and establish a state there. After the death of Mustafa Çokay in December 1941,³⁹⁸ Mayer-Mader cooperated with Veli Kayyum Han in the establishment of the troops, who would become the president of the *Milli Türkistan Birlik Komitesi* (National Turkestan Union Committee).³⁹⁹ Consequently, the

³⁹⁴ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 26.

³⁹⁵ Neulen, p. 324. This unit, founded in Skierniewice, was also known as Turkbataillon 450. It was included into Army Group South in early May 1942. Afterwards, the commanders of the unit changed on different dates. Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 136.

³⁹⁶ Von zur Mühlen, p. 53.

³⁹⁷ Chiang Kai-Sek was the Chinese military commander and the First Chairman (between 1928 and 1931) of the “Nationalist Government of China.” In the framework of the Sino-German Cooperation (1911-1941), Hans von Seeckt (between 1933 and 1935) and Alexander von Falkenhausen (between 1935 and 1938) were the military consultants of Chiang Kai-Sek. The cooperation officially continued until China declared war on Germany on December 9, 1941. For detailed information, see, Stefan Berleb, “*For China’s Benefit*” *The Evolution and Devolution of German Influence on Chinese Military Affairs, 1919-1938*, unpublished PhD. Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 2005. See, pp. 171-265 especially.

³⁹⁸ See below for details.

³⁹⁹ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 30.

Unternehmen Tiger B (Initiative Tiger B)⁴⁰⁰ was set under the responsibility of OKH instead of “Office for Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Service in the OKW” under the command of Mayer-Mader. These troops would serve as core for the future Turkestan Legion.⁴⁰¹

At the end of the year 1941, one Azerbaijani and six Turkestani divisions were under arms. Zielonka POW camp⁴⁰² became one of the main centers to gather the newly recruits. As Mayer-Mader himself told the members of Zielonka camp, there were over one thousand and two hundred men, “all from Turkestan.”⁴⁰³ Mayer-Mader brought to nearly all command posts of these divisions Turkestani officers. But the Turkestani officers had to report to a German liaison, even if the liaisons had lower ranks than the Turkestani officers.⁴⁰⁴ However, incidents were seen, at which this procedure was reversed in favor of higher-ranking Turkestani officers after receiving complaints from them.⁴⁰⁵

Germans had released some political prisoners held in the Soviet prisons, when they occupied parts of Russia. They included these into the newly founded companies. Some of the former prisoners were accused of practicing Islam openly. They got no military training before and had difficulties in understanding military commands.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁰ See, “Special Purpose Units” below for Abwehrsunternehmen Tiger B.

⁴⁰¹ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 30.

⁴⁰² Zielonka was located in Poland, about thirteen kilometers from the Warsaw city center.

⁴⁰³ Crane, p. 93.

⁴⁰⁴ Isakjan Narzikul was one of the Turkestani commanding officers of the seven companies, established under “Tiger Battalion” (most probably the Unternehmen Tiger B) in Zielonka. Master Sergeant (later promoted to Lieutenant by the Wehrmacht) Narzikul’s company was composed of 240 men. His liaison, Schneider’s rank was sergeant. See, Crane, p. 93.

⁴⁰⁵ Narzikul’s hierarchical situation was changed by Mayer-Mader himself after his complaints, who was a friend of Narzikul. Thus, it is strongly possible that this had been an individual incident and was not widespread among all the Turkestani troops. See, Crane, p. 106.

⁴⁰⁶ Crane, p. 94.

The Eastern troops got their German military uniforms, “two weeks before Christmas, 1941” with the patch on their arms “Alla Biz Bilen (God with us).” Former Red Army lieutenant Baymirza Hayit,⁴⁰⁷ who had been an officer in the Turkestan Legion after being captured, sometimes visited the Turkestani battalions and delivered speeches.⁴⁰⁸

It is necessary to remind that the head of SS, Heinrich Himmler and Alfred Rosenberg were in disagreement about the responsibilities of the volunteer legions. Rosenberg considered the citizens of the Soviet Union under his sphere of authority. He stated in his memoirs that “Himmler knew nothing about the East,”⁴⁰⁹ while regarding himself as being “on very friendly terms” with the “Asiatic” volunteers.⁴¹⁰

It is necessary to mention here that these two types of units were different from each other: the Ost-Bataillone (East Battalions) and the Turk-Bataillone (Turk[estan] Battalions). The East Battalions’ personnel were derived from the ethnic Russians, Byelorussians, and a few Ukrainians, while the personnel of Turkestan Battalions were from Turkic and some non-Turkic peoples of Central Asia and Caucasus. These battalions were “directly attached to a corps staff.”⁴¹¹

According to Wagner, Hitler evaluated the people of the Caucasus as “politically harmless.”⁴¹² On the other hand, he was cautious and abstained from

⁴⁰⁷ Baymirza Hayit was born in Namangan, Uzbekistan in 1917. He graduated from the Tashkent University in 1939. He was called to Red Army and stationed in Poland as a squadron tank commander. He was captured by the Germans in 1941.

⁴⁰⁸ Crane, p. 95. See, Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, National Archives, Microcopy, T-175/162/2695249; T-175/162/2695369; T-175/162/2695393. For some of the sample drawings of Germans for the badges of different Muslim and Turkic units, see the appendices.

⁴⁰⁹ Rosenberg, p. 280.

⁴¹⁰ Rosenberg, p. 280.

⁴¹¹ Bishop, p. 70.

⁴¹² Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 122.

granting them any powers or authorities. Hitler also restrained the size of the units: their size could never exceed battalion size. Further, the units should be together with the German units, as much as possible.⁴¹³

By the establishment of the legions, the above-mentioned POW commissions employed by the Ostministerium played a decisive role.⁴¹⁴ Rosenberg found Caucasian people “acceptable” for using to realize their aims in the East.⁴¹⁵ Wagner thought that the chance to draw the Turkestani and Caucasian peoples to the German side would be very beneficial.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹³ Littlejohn, p. 251.

⁴¹⁴ Von zur Mühlen, p. 53.

⁴¹⁵ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 122.

⁴¹⁶ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 123.

CHAPTER VII

THE TURKESTAN LEGION and TURKESTANIS IN THE WAFFEN-SS

7.1 The Establishment of the Turkestan Legion

The German Army objected the establishment of the fighting units composed of different nationalities from the very early stages on. This tough resistance was eliminated finally by the end 1941. By the early December 1941, Rosenberg presented a memorandum to Hitler, which pointed out the necessity of the establishment of the “Turk[ic]” legions. On December 14, 1941, Hitler approved this plan and on December 22, 1941, the OKW officially ordered one Turkestani, one Armenian, one Georgian and one Muslim-Caucasian⁴¹⁷ legion to be formed by December 30, 1941.⁴¹⁸ On January 13, 1942, the Chief of the Equipment Army and Commander of the Auxiliary Army⁴¹⁹ ordered the establishment of the Turkestani and Caucasian-Muslim troops under the command of Mayer-Mader. He was to select soldiers from the above-mentioned seven divisions and put into the “Turkestan Legion.”⁴²⁰

From February 18, 1942 on, the administrative organ for the training of the Turkestan Legion in Rembertów⁴²¹ (and from summer 1942, in Radom⁴²²) was the

⁴¹⁷ This was divided into two as the Azerbaijani and the North Caucasian Legions later on.

⁴¹⁸ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 48.

⁴¹⁹ *Chef der Heeresrüstung und Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres.*

⁴²⁰ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 30.

⁴²¹ Rembertów is in today’s Poland, a borough of Warsaw.

⁴²² Radom is a city in the center regions of today’s Poland.

Aufstellungsstab der Ostlegionen (Formation Staff of the Eastern Legions). Though this name was changed to Stab (Staff) after a short while, and to Kommando der Ostlegionen (Command of Eastern Legions), from January 23 onwards.⁴²³ Recruiting from the POWs and from the population of Caucasus and Central Asia was conducted under a special unit “Organizational Staff K.” Also, a special unit was formed within the responsibility of “Staff K” for propaganda works among the POWs in the camps. This unit had organizational duties too: it began to separate the ethnic Russians from the Caucasians.⁴²⁴

From February 19, 1942 on, Mayer-Mader, the commander of the Turkestan Legion was employed for the preparation of the “450th Turkestani Infantry Battalion” out of the 1st Battalion in Skierniewice.⁴²⁵ He was to train and prepare the newly founded legion for battle. Also, he was commissioned for the strengthening of the 2nd Battalion in that city. Under the name Stab, in early March, the 450th Infantry Battalion was composed of the following units: 1st Kirgiz Company, 2nd Uzbek Company, 3rd Kazak Company, 4th Turkmen Company, a Tajik Platoon, an Eastern Tatar Platoon, a machine-gun platoon composed of Kirgiz, Uzbek and Kazak soldiers, and a mixed anti-tank, pioneer and heavy-grenade launcher platoon.⁴²⁶

In March 1942, parallel formations were established in the occupied Soviet territories. In addition to these, in Crimea and Kalmuk steppes, militia and special troops armed by the German Army were present. These were under the command of

⁴²³ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 31-32.

⁴²⁴ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 49.

⁴²⁵ Skierniewice is a town in the center of today’s Poland.

⁴²⁶ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 31-32.

the Waffen-SS or the OKW and were used primarily against the partisan warfare in the rear zones.⁴²⁷

By the way, the 3rd Battalion in Paprotnia⁴²⁸ became the Kaukasisch-Mohammedanische Legion (Caucasian-Muslim Legion) under the command of Major Riedel. The Georgian and Armenian Legions were given headquarters in Wesola.⁴²⁹ Since the Georgian Legion's composition was heterogeneous, the North Caucasian peoples in this unit were separated into a North Caucasian Legion on August 2, 1942 under Captain Housselle. On August 15, 1942, the "Chief of the Equipment Army and Commander of the Auxiliary Army"⁴³⁰ ordered the establishment of a Volga Tatar Legion under the responsibility of Major Freiherr von Seckendorff in Jedlina.⁴³¹

7.2 The Legionnaires under German Ranks

7.2.1 Legionnaires in Poland

After all the re-groupings and changes of headquarters, the final forms of the legions came into being. There were six national legions in different regions of the occupied Poland (or Generalgouvernement in Poland) from the peoples of Turkestan, the Caucasus, and Upper-Volga Regions in August 1942. These were set under the authority of Kommando der Ostlegionen (Command of the Eastern Legions) in Rembertow.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ Von zur Mühlen, p. 54.

⁴²⁸ Paprotnia is in the center of today's Poland.

⁴²⁹ Wesola is a district of today's Warsaw.

⁴³⁰ *Chef der Heeresrüstung und Befehlshaber der Ersatzheeres.*

⁴³¹ Hoffmann, Die Ostlegionen, p. 32.

⁴³² Hoffmann, Die Ostlegionen, p. 33.

The Turkestanische Legion (Turkestan Legion) was established in Legionowo⁴³³ from the Karakalpakhs, Kazaks, Kirgizs, Tadjiks, Turkmens, Uzbeks, and other minor nations or clans like Dungans, Iranians, Kashgars, Taranchis, Kurama clan, and Osttataren (Eastern Tatars).⁴³⁴ The Kaukasisch-Mohammedanische Legion (after August 2, 1942 named as Azerbaijdzansische Legion) was formed in Jedlina.⁴³⁵ As for the Nordkaukasische Legion in Wesola, its personnel were derived from a variety of nationalities such as Abkhazs, Adiges, Circassians, Kabardins, Balkars, Karachays, Chechens, Ingushs, Kumuks, Nogays, Avars, Dargins, Laks, Lezgins, Kurds, and the North Ossetians. The Georgische Legion established by the Georgians, Adjaras, Imeretis, Lazs, Mingrelians, Svans and the South Ossetians, was stationed in Kruszyna.⁴³⁶ The Armenische Legion, established primarily by the Armenians of Karabakh, founded in Pulawy.⁴³⁷ Finally, the Volgatatarische Legion was established on August 15, 1942 and deployed in Jedlina. Its personnel were derived from Kazantatars, Tatars of Ufa (Bashkiria), Bashkirs, Mordvians, Maris and Tatar-speaking Chuvash and Udmurt people.⁴³⁸

One can understand that the high-ranking officers of the Wehrmacht first saw the establishment of the legions as a political decision and propaganda instrument for the war against the Soviet Union. Only on April 24, 1942, first instructions on the formation of the Ostlegionen and their internal affairs were published.

⁴³³ Legionowo is a town in the center of today's Poland.

⁴³⁴ In the German source (Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 33), the names of the peoples and clans in the Turkestan Legion are as follows (in German): "Karakalpaken, Kazachen, Kirgizen, Tadziken, *Turkmenen, Uzbeken, ... , Beludzen, Dunganen, Iraner, Kasgaren, Kuraminen, Sugnanen, Tarancen und Osttataren.*"

⁴³⁵ Jedlina is a district in the center-east of today's Poland.

⁴³⁶ Kruszyna is a voivodeship in today's Poland.

⁴³⁷ Pulawy is a town in today's eastern Poland.

⁴³⁸ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 33; Romanko, "The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945," p. 50.

7.2.2 Legionnaires in the Ukraine

A high-ranking officer of the German Army, who played a crucial role in the organization of the legions, Major Graf von Stauffenberg, had a political conceptualization regarding the formations of the legions. He was planning the “resurrection” of Caucasian and Turkestani national states with the help of his forces. He found the National Turkestan Union Committee the most suitable for his aims, compared to the other national committees.⁴³⁹

Stauffenberg was not alone when he dealt with the organization of the legions. He managed to bring like-minded officers such as Ernst-August Köstring, to some of the key positions too.⁴⁴⁰ As the Inspector General of Turkic and Caucasian Forces, Köstring visited the legions in Poland and the Ukraine for investigation and positively reported on the legions to the Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres (Head of the General Staff of the Army).⁴⁴¹

The Kommando der 162. Infantriedivision (Command of the 162nd Infantry Division), led by Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, was one of the core units when it came to the legions in the Ukraine. Niedermayer was balancing his lack of commanding-skills in war with his knowledge in the social sciences.⁴⁴² The order in May 1942 required his unit to serve as the main unit for the formation and training

⁴³⁹ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 125.

⁴⁴⁰ Köstring was appointed to this post in August 1942. Littlejohn, p. 252.

⁴⁴¹ Stauffenberg was the Gruppenleiter der Organisationsabteilung II (Group Manager of Organisation Division II) in the General Staff of the Land Army (OKH). Köstring was the General of the Cavalry. He was an expert on Russia and had been military attaché to the Soviet Union (1932-1941). See, Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, pp. 51-52. On August 10, 1942, Köstring was named for “Authorized General for Caucasus” in the Army Group A of OKH. Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 122.

⁴⁴² Niedermayer (November 1885, Freising – September 1948 Vladimir, Soviet Union) was a more academic and political character than a military officer. He was an expert of war geography and war politics, the Director of the *Institut für allgemeine Wehrlehre* (Institute for General Defense Studies) at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin. He had intimate knowledge on the political behavior in the Soviet Union as well as the Near East and the Middle East. Niedermayer spoke Russian, Persian and Turkish. Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 61. Littlejohn claims that he was converted to Islam. See Littlejohn, p. 252.

of the volunteers from the POWs across the region between Kiev and Poltava. In addition to the political reasons, the rising number of the casualties at the front made it necessary to increase the number of the units composed of the Turkestanis.⁴⁴³

The POW camp Dulag⁴⁴⁴ 127 in Lokhvytsia⁴⁴⁵ was designated to be a concentration lager for Armenians, Dulag 137 in Romny⁴⁴⁶ for the Turkestanis and Dulag 200 in Pryluky⁴⁴⁷ for Azerbaijanis, Dulag 120 in Mirgorod⁴⁴⁸ for Northern Caucasians, where also the Aufstellungsstab (Formation Staff) of the legions and courses for the translators took place.⁴⁴⁹ The Formation Staff established twenty five field battalions, two reinforced half-battalions, seven construction-battalions and three reserve battalions from May 1942 until May 1943.⁴⁵⁰ On December 12, 1942, in the headquarters of the 162nd Infantry Division in the Ukraine, there were about 35,000 men in total.⁴⁵¹

In the spring of 1942, the center for the formation of the Eastern Legions in the Ukraine became the headquarters of 162nd Infantry Division. The personnel of this division were sent to Świątoszów⁴⁵² for training and continuation of the formation. The division got an organization of two regiments: the 303rd Turkestani and the 314th Azerbaijani infantry regiments. The recruitment was fifty per cent

⁴⁴³ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁴ Dulag was the short form of German word Durchgangslager referring to the POW camps, where prisoners-of-war were temporarily concentrated to be transported to main POW camps.

⁴⁴⁵ Lokhvytsia is a city in the Poltava oblast of today's Ukraine.

⁴⁴⁶ Romny is a city in the northern oblast Sumy of today's Ukraine.

⁴⁴⁷ Pryluky is a city on the Udai River in the north-central oblast Cherniviv of today's Ukraine.

⁴⁴⁸ Mirgorod is a city in the Poltava oblast of today's Ukraine.

⁴⁴⁹ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 62; Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 7.

⁴⁵⁰ Neulen, p. 325. The field battalions in the Ukraine by May 1943 were: 12 Turkestani (I/29, I/44, I/76, I/94, I/100, I/295, I/297, I/305, I/370, I/371, I/384, I/389), 6 Azerbaijani (I/4, I/73, I/97, I/101, I/111, II/73) 4 Georgian (I/1, I/9, II/4, II/198), and 3 Armenian (I/125, I/198, II/9), and 2 strengthened North Caucasian sub-battalions (842 and 843), 7 construction and 2 reserve battalions. See, Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8.

⁴⁵¹ Neulen, pp. 331-332.

⁴⁵² German: Neuhammer. A city in the occupied Poland. Today in the Southwest of Poland.

Germans (Volksdeutsche, if possible), and fifty per cent non-Germans, namely the legionnaires, as a principle for this unit.⁴⁵³

The General of the Infantry, Friedrich Olbricht's instructions defined the legions as "units of volunteer warriors, who fight for the liberation of their motherland from Bolshevism and for the liberation of their faiths."⁴⁵⁴ On the top of the legion-command and field battalions, according to these instructions, had to be a German commander. On the other hand, the instructions coming from the OKH were in a direction that the section and platoon command positions had to be given to the legionnaires. Also, the command positions had to be given to the legionnaires according to their "characteristic as well as military adequacy and qualification"⁴⁵⁵ regardless of the former position in the Red Army.⁴⁵⁶ However, in practice, these orders were obeyed only in part and the authority of the legionnaire commanders remained at lower levels.⁴⁵⁷

Simultaneously, further units, which were not formal Legions, were established in Crimea in the first half of 1942.⁴⁵⁸ The Einsatzgruppe D (Task Force D) established volunteer formations for fighting against partisan forces in the beginning of 1942.⁴⁵⁹ These units were first organized as Selbstschutzkompanien (Self-Defense Companies).⁴⁶⁰ By the end of November 1942, these established eight

⁴⁵³ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8; Neulen, p. 331.

⁴⁵⁴ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 35.

⁴⁵⁵ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 35.

⁴⁵⁶ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 35.

⁴⁵⁷ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 34.

⁴⁵⁸ On January 3, 1942, Tatar-Muslim Committee convened in Simferopol for the first time. The chairman was Abdurreşidova. Two days later, a "recruitment center" was opened in Simferopol to recruit volunteers from local Tatar population. In January, 9,255 volunteers were gathered, of which 8,684 were sent to the German 11th Army. The rest was evaluated as "unfit" for battle and sent back home. See, Romanko, "The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945," pp. 71-72.

⁴⁵⁹ The Einsatzgruppe D recruited 1,632 men in January 1942. See, Romanko, "The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945," p. 72.

⁴⁶⁰ The personnel of the Self-Defense Companies wore dark blue uniforms. There were some

Schutzmannschaftbattalions (defense-team battalions).⁴⁶¹ The total strength of these battalions was nearly 20,000 men.⁴⁶² These were not counted among the Eastern Legions and classified as volunteer units, mostly used against partisan forces and for paramilitary purposes behind the front line or in the occupied cities.

7.2.3 Special Purpose Units

The Caucasus had been an overly tough territory for the Imperial and Soviet Russia to fully penetrate their authorities. The struggle for independence of the peoples inhabiting the Caucasus region engaged Russian governments and armies; the region could not be integrated into Russia completely. This fact drew the attention of the Germans before the invasion of the Soviet Russia and they wanted to make use of it. Here, to mention shortly the legions created by the Germans for special aims before the beginning of the attacks on the Soviet Union is necessary.

Hitler personally suggested the creation of the “Free Caucasus” movement in order to strengthen his hand politically by attracting the Caucasian people to German side before the planned invasion of the region and the oil rich territories nearby. After the Operation Barbarossa, “Free Committees” of Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and other Caucasus nations were formed. After April 15, 1942, Germans declared these as “governments in forming.” Also, Germans discussed plans for the creation of the so-called “Confederation of the Caucasus” from 1942 until 1943.⁴⁶³

members of these units, who were clearly anti-German, but they could not express their feelings. See, Schedule B / Vol. 10, Case 7, The Harvard Project, p. 1.

⁴⁶¹ The 147th and 154th Battalions in the Crimea were stationed in Simferopol [Aqmescit], the 148th Battalion in Karasubazar [Qarasuvbazar, today's Bilohirsk], the 149th Battalion in Bakhchisaray [Bağçasaray], the 150th Battalion in Yalta, the 151st Battalion in Alushta [Aluşta], the 152nd Battalion in Dzhankoy [Canköy], the 153rd Battalion in Feodosiya [Kefe]. See, Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 73.

⁴⁶² Neulen, p. 325; Chief of the OKH, Colonel General Halder instructed in August 1942 that the “local auxiliary forces in the East” are to be used against the partisan forces. See, Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 73.

⁴⁶³ Abramian, pp. 9-12.

Though most of their members were liquidated by the agents of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) throughout 1920s and 1930s, Caucasus peoples kept on their guerilla warfare.⁴⁶⁴ During the World War II, some of these groups served under German intelligence before the formation of the above-mentioned "special forces." The official order to establish these units was signed by Admiral Wilhelm Franz Canaris in 1940, the head of the Abwehr. These formations were, as propagandized by the Germans, planned to be used in all over the Europe, including Turkey.⁴⁶⁵

In June 1941, just before the Operation Barbarossa, a special unit under Major Wilhelm Braun was established in Poland named Walli I by the Secret Service department of the Abwehr. The Germans' plans were that Walli I would be used in special operations, such as sabotage and reconnaissance, in the Soviet Union. The formation of Walli II and Walli III followed in the following days by other departments of the Abwehr, again for the special operations to be conducted during the invasion of the Soviet Union.⁴⁶⁶

Like it had been by the Turkestani POWs, the Caucasian POWs were first served as volunteer laborers in the German Army, then constituted the Ostbataillons and finally joined the Wehrmacht in German uniforms. Similar to all Soviet POWs, two categories of the Caucasus POWs could be distinguished: first were the POWs, who had no ideological motivations to fight against the Soviet Union. They fought for surviving the tough living standards in the camps. On the other hand, POWs in the second category were composed of idealists fighting for their so-called "independence." Those in the second category were either those, who were in

⁴⁶⁴ These groups were Armenian Dashnaks, Georgian Mensheviks, and Azerbaijani Musavat.

⁴⁶⁵ Abramian, pp. 16-17; Littlejohn, p. 251.

⁴⁶⁶ Abramian, pp. 16-17.

contact with the German Abwehr II⁴⁶⁷ before the war; or those, who were distinguished from the first category and selected into special units.⁴⁶⁸

Beginning from October 18, 1941, under Mayer-Mader's Unternehmen Tiger B, a special unit was set up for sabotage and diversion.⁴⁶⁹ This army group was established as a special forces unit and set under the responsibility of both Abwehr and the Foreign Office. Its personnel were derived from the Brandenburg Regiment z.b.V 800 (Special Employment Regiment 800), a commando unit, and Caucasian peoples, who were POWs before.⁴⁷⁰

The battalion of Theodor Oberländer, the Bergmann (Mountaineer) or the Sonderverband Bergmann (Special Troops of Mountaineers) belonged to the Caucasian special forces units. It was formed in Mittenwald. This unit included former Tsarist officers, who were émigrés in Paris, members of intelligentsia from the Caucasian POWs, personnel from division Brandenburg, and personnel from the Abwehr II.⁴⁷¹ This was a unique unit in every respect, including also in terms of its oath. They did not swear for loyalty to Hitler in person, but the Wehrmacht itself.⁴⁷²

7.3 Legionnaires in Duty

7.3.1 Leaving the Legion Camps

Based on the official numbers of the POWs in the German camps, the establishment of the first wave of fifteen strengthened field battalions began in

⁴⁶⁷ Abwehr II is the short of Abteilung II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr im OKW (Office for Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Service in the OKW).

⁴⁶⁸ Brockdorff, p. 247.

⁴⁶⁹ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 27; Muñoz, *Hitler's Eastern Legions*, p. 12. By the spring of 1942, Mayer-Mader was deprived from the post to be replaced by Bergen.

⁴⁷⁰ Johnatan Trigg, *Hitler's Jihadis: Muslim Volunteers of the SS* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2008), pp. 41-42; Muñoz, *Hitler's Eastern Legions*, p. 12.

⁴⁷¹ Brockdorff, p. 248; Littlejohn, p. 251.

⁴⁷² Neulen, p. 324.

1942. The Stab was trying to carry out the orders of the OKH as soon as possible. It was reporting, however, on September 11, 1942, that these battalions were ready for use and their need for weapons and equipment was satisfied. This enabled the dispatching of the first wave of these field battalions to the front until the end of the autumn 1942, though in unprepared condition.⁴⁷³

First, the 450th Battalion, whose personnel came from the Turkestan Legion, became “ready for service.” Its commander was Major Mayer-Mader, who commanded the above-mentioned 444th Turkestani Battalion before. The 450th and 452nd Turkestani Infantry Battalions and a part of the Turkestan Legion departed from Poland in the spring of 1942 for front. In the autumn of that year, more battalions were dispatched to the Eastern Front.⁴⁷⁴ These were the 781st, 782nd, 783rd, and 784th Turkestani Infantry Battalions. Also, two Azerbaijani Infantry Battalions, 804 and 805;⁴⁷⁵ three North Caucasian Infantry Battalions, 800 (Circassians), 801 (Dagestanis), 802 (Ossetians); two Georgian Infantry Battalions, 795 and 796; and two Armenian Infantry Battalions 808 and 809 were sent to the front in the spring of 1942.⁴⁷⁶

On September 22, 1942, Colonel Ralph von Heygendorff was named for the “Commander of the Deployment Staff of the Eastern Legions” in Rembertów.⁴⁷⁷ He had units from various nationalities in his army group area before.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷³ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 38.

⁴⁷⁴ Jurado, p. 18; Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 53.

⁴⁷⁵ These units were sent to Caucasus front. Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 160, The Harvard Project, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁶ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 38.

⁴⁷⁷ Kommandeur des Aufstellungssabes der Ostlegionen. Heygendorff was the commander of an infantry regiment in the Army Group Center.

⁴⁷⁸ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 135.

The progress of the second wave of dispatches continued until spring 1943. Twenty one field battalions left Poland: the Turkestani Infantry Battalions 785, 786, 787, 788, 789; the Azerbaijani Infantry Battalions 806, 807, 817, 818; the North Caucasus Infantry Battalion 803; the Georgian Infantry Battalions 797, 798, 799, 822; the Armenian Infantry Battalions 810, 811, 812, 813; and the Volga Tatar Infantry Battalions 825, 826, 827.

The second half of 1943 witnessed the third wave of dispatches. This time seventeen battalions were dispatched: the Turkestani Infantry Battalions 790, 791, 792; the Azerbaijani Infantry Battalions 819, 820; the North Caucasus Infantry Battalions 835, 836, 837; the Georgian Infantry Battalions 823, 824; the Armenian Infantry Battalions 814, 815, 816; and the Volga Tatar Infantry Battalions 828, 829, 830.

The Stab, and later on Kommando der Ostlegionen in Poland established no less than fifty three⁴⁷⁹ battalions and rendered them to the field army. The total strength of these formations was nearly fifty three thousand men.⁴⁸⁰ Battalions got three rifle companies, a machinegun and a staff company. Each company was composed of 130-200 men. Within the rifle company, there were three rifle platoons and a machine gun platoon, while within the staff company there were anti-tank, engineer and communications platoons.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁹ Though Drobyazko and Karaschuk stated that a total of 52 field battalions were formed. Among these were: 14 Turkestani, 8 Azerbaijani, 7 North Caucasian, 8 Georgian, 8 Armenian, 7 Volga Tatar units. See, Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 5.

⁴⁸⁰ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, pp. 38-39. Neulen, p. 325.

⁴⁸¹ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 5.

Battalions had 800-1000 soldiers and officers, including Germans. However, the number of Germans in these units was about 60 men. German officers got non-German deputy officers. Below-company level commanding was national.⁴⁸²

7.3.2 Legions in Combat

The fighting capabilities and preparedness for battle of the legionnaires differed and depended on many different factors. For example the 825th and 827th Volga Tatar Battalion failed because of a disease during its times of establishment and infiltration of Soviet agents. Also, the German command was poor and the armament and equipment inadequate. The latter was the consequence of the fact that the Germans did not regard the legionnaires as their counterparts, at least until 1944.⁴⁸³

First Turkestani battalions were sent to the front near Stalingrad in the autumn of 1942, while the German *Heeresgruppe Süd* (Army Group South) was conducting the Fall Blau (Operation Blue).⁴⁸⁴ This Army Group was split into two for the operation as Army Group A and Army Group B.⁴⁸⁵ In the rear-front of both Army Groups, the battalions conducted “security operations” between September 1942 and January 1943.⁴⁸⁶ The 162nd Infantry Division of Turkestanis conducted

⁴⁸² The German Rahmenpersonal in the battalions were composed of 4 officers, 1 clerk, 32 NCOs and 23 privates. See, Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 5.

⁴⁸³ The German trains carried signs, with “Polen, Juden und Legionäre letzter Wagen! (Poles, Jews and legionnaires last waggon!)” See, Neulen, p. 329.

⁴⁸⁴ Fall Blau was a continuation of Operation Barbarossa, conducted in the South of Eastern Front between June 28, 1942 until November 1942. German Army faced the strongest Russian resistance in Stalingrad and the Axis forces retreated from Caucasus.

⁴⁸⁵ S.P. MacKenzie, *The Second World War in Europe*, 2nd edition (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2009), pp. 66-67.

⁴⁸⁶ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 55.

front line duties in the front for a short time. Afterwards, it dispatched to Yugoslavia in September 1943 and then to Italy to fight against the partisans.⁴⁸⁷

Between September 1942 and January 1943, the 452nd and 781st Turkestani Battalions, 796th Georgian, 808th Armenian and 800th North Caucasian Battalions were sent to the front to participate at the German attack in Tuapse.⁴⁸⁸ In the same period, the 804th Azerbaijani Battalion was organized in four mountain divisions and attacked with the German 49th Mountain Corps towards Sukhumi.⁴⁸⁹ In Nalchik⁴⁹⁰ and Mozdok,⁴⁹¹ the 805th, 806th and I/111th Azerbaijani,⁴⁹² 801st and 802nd North Caucasian, 795th Georgian, 809th Armenian and I/370th Turkestani Battalions joined Germans in the Operations.⁴⁹³ In the direction to Astrakhan, 450th, 782nd and 811th Turkestani Battalions were stationed under the command of the 16th Panzer Grenadier Division for a possible march into Central Asia.⁴⁹⁴

From the accounts of Baymirza Hayit and legionnaires, who were sent to Caucasian front in November 1942 and April 1943, it is also understood that they were actively involved in the operations. These operations were both anti-partisan and regular army operations. Some of the legionnaires were heavily wounded while some others were killed in the front. For those died, ceremonies were held in the legion headquarters, during which also the anthem of Turkestan was played.⁴⁹⁵ The wounded soldiers were awarded with medals.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁷ Littlejohn, p. 252; Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8.

⁴⁸⁸ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8. Tuapse is on the northeastern shore of the Black Sea, North of Sochi.

⁴⁸⁹ Sukhumi is the capital of today's Abkhazia. See, Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8.

⁴⁹⁰ Nalchik is the capital of today's Kabardino-Balkar Republic.

⁴⁹¹ Mozdok is a city in the North of today's Republic of North Ossetia-Alania.

⁴⁹² The Roman numbers refer to serial number, and the Arabic numbers refer to division number. See, Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8.

⁴⁹³ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8.

⁴⁹⁴ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 8.

⁴⁹⁵ See appendix for the anthem.

⁴⁹⁶ Hayit wrote in his article that this ceremony was held in April 16, 1943, in the presence of Veli

The special purpose units of Caucasian peoples, on the other hand, had two duties: first group of them set up in Caucasus as fighting units. Second group was parachuted behind the Red Army lines to organize diversion and sabotage operations.⁴⁹⁷ By doing this, Germans aimed to provoke at least some of the Caucasian peoples' uprising against the Soviet Union.

Other special commando units were those of First Lieutenant Heinz Lange and Lieutenant Moritz. Their commandos were dropped with parachutes over Chechnya. The operation was named as Unternehmen Schamil, continued between August and December 1942. For three months, they fought against the Red Army as partisans. They had been so successful in the fighting that the Soviets had to dispatch a full army corps to the region. Many Chechens joined them, but a full-fledged uprising could not be triggered.⁴⁹⁸ On the other hand, the above-mentioned land-fighting units of the Caucasian formations suffered heavy losses against the Red Army, especially in the battles along the Terek River.⁴⁹⁹

The Caucasian peoples proved themselves as distinguished fighters.⁵⁰⁰ As an example, the Sonderverband Bergmann defeated 800 men strong Georgian Red Army division in the Caucasus front in the summer of 1942. After that, some Georgian Red Army soldiers switched to the German side.⁵⁰¹ After the German retreat from the Caucasus in January 1943, they were reorganized into three battalions. The Wehrmacht sent the 1st and 3rd Battalions to defend Crimea on

Kayyum Han and the legion commanders (Hauptmann Ernicke) at the headquarters of the 789th Turkestani Battalion. Hayit quoted in his article about the memoirs of Q. Qoliq, Tacıbay, Xalıakbar B. Oğlu, Marufcan, Abcalıl Rustam, Ataxan, Pişpekli Alımbek oğlu (names as in the original article). See, Baymirza Hayit, "Başlığımız Legionçılar Arasında: Milliy Legion – Milliy hərəkatda," *Millij Türkistan* (May 15, 1943, Vol. 19-20), pp. 9-29.

⁴⁹⁷ Littlejohn, p. 251.

⁴⁹⁸ Brockdorff, p. 248.

⁴⁹⁹ Littlejohn, p. 251.

⁵⁰⁰ Brockdorff, p. 248.

⁵⁰¹ Neulen, p. 324.

November 17, 1943. The 2nd Azerbaijani battalion contributed to the suppression of the uprising in Warsaw as late as in August 1944.⁵⁰²

After Hitler ordered the transfer of the Eastern Legions from the Eastern Front, most of them were sent to France.⁵⁰³ The Turkestani soldiers on the German side were seriously tested against the Allied Forces in January 1944. The 162nd Infantry Division met the enemy on the battlefield between Trieste, Pola and Fiume in Italy on the shore of the Adriatic Sea. The unit could not meet the expectations.⁵⁰⁴

As the administrative center of five regiments of Eastern Troops at the Western Front, on February 1, 1944, the *Freiwilligen-Ost Stamm Division* (Volunteer-East Cadre Division) was formed in Lyonnais, France. Regiments were composed of three battalions each. These regiments were designated to supply the battalions of the Eastern Legions at the front.⁵⁰⁵ The *Freiwilligen Stamm Regiment* Nr. 1, composed of Turkestani, Georgian, North Caucasian legionnaires, was stationed in Castres. In Macon, the *Freiwilligen Stamm Regiment* Nr. 3 was stationed, which “supplied replacements for the 162nd Infantry Division.”⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰² Neulen, p. 324.

⁵⁰³ See below for the reasons of the transfer.

⁵⁰⁴ Neulen, pp. 330-331.

⁵⁰⁵ Muñoz, *Hitler's Eastern Legions*, p. 24.

⁵⁰⁶ After June 1944, this regiment supplied only Ukrainian volunteers. Muñoz, *Hitler's Eastern Legions*, p. 24. The other regiments and their locations in France were: Divisional headquarters in Lyonnais (various nationalities), military school for the volunteer units in Lyonnais (various nationalities), *Freiwilligen Stamm Regiment* Nr. 2 in Mende (Volga Tatars, Azerbaijanis, Armenians; after April 1944 only Russian and Ukrainian volunteers; after June 1944 only Ukrainian volunteers), *Freiwilligen Stamm Regiment* Nr. 4 in Namur (Russian and Ukrainian; after June 1944 only Ukrainian volunteers), *Freiwilligen Stamm Regiment* Nr. 5 in Langres (Cossacks). See, Muñoz, *Hitler's Eastern Legions*, p. 24.

The Turkestani troops in Europe took active part in the combats against the Allied Forces during Normandy landings in mid-1944. For the defense of Lorient in France, the Eastern troops were used as coast guards and for other services.⁵⁰⁷

7.4 Daily Life in the Legions

The Turkestanis constituted the strongest contingent of all Eastern Peoples in the German Army with more than one hundred and eighty thousand men in 132 units by 1944.⁵⁰⁸ This required an overwhelming organization of a propaganda department, led by twenty seven leading propagandists. Hoffmann states that a minimum number of 653 propagandists worked under them. For propaganda in the legions, three newspapers, thirteen political manuscripts were published. Furthermore, 705 instructions booklets and guidelines for propaganda were issued, 52 propaganda lessons were held, and 118 different flyers were composed.⁵⁰⁹

Not only German, but also Russian propaganda prevailed in the daily life of the legionnaires. In some of the publications of the Muslims, some authors openly stated that their nationality policy was close to the Bolshevik ideology, rather than the German one. Germans did not tolerate these ideas and liquidated these elements immediately.⁵¹⁰

The procedure followed by Germans to prepare the legionnaires to fight on their side worked as follows: Before gaining the official legionnaire status, the

⁵⁰⁷ Neulen, p. 331.

⁵⁰⁸ Hayit gives the number as 181,402. See Hayit, *Turkestan im Herzen Euroasiens*, p. 103.

⁵⁰⁹ Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, pp. 134-135; Neulen, p. 328.

⁵¹⁰ One example had been published in the 3rd volume of the journal *Türk Birliği* (Union of Turks) by Şamaliyev. See the document from the Kampfbund der Turk-Tataren und Idel-Urals to SS-Hauptamt Herrn Dr. Olzscha, January 3, 1945. NA, T-354/161/3807012; for the translation of the article in the journal, see, T-354/161/3807013; T-354/161/3807030; T-354/161/3807031; T-354/161/3807015; T-354/161/3807009; T-354/161/3807010; T-354/161/3807011. See appendix for a list of Muslims in the publishing business.

POWs in the camps were prepared for battles. Hüseyin İkrâm Han, a former officer of the Red Army in a German POW camp near Kraków reported that early in the morning they got physical training, then cleaning of the barracks. The latter was not a regular duty. Afterwards, they got military training on the barracks' yard for one to two hours. They did not use genuine rifles at the training, but sticks, with which they attacked on hides filled with straw. The candidates for legionnaires got a rest and then football game after lunch. At the camps, no continuous political propaganda was applied on them like at the Soviet barracks.⁵¹¹ The training in the legions was more complicated.

Separate camps were established for the educated and former officers of Red Army. Lectures were given them by Germans living in the USSR and also "native Germans who had learned Russian."⁵¹² The POWs got German language classes early in the morning. They were introduced German weapons and taught how to use them, after a while. The POWs were lectured politically, taking courses of the history of Central Asia. Sometimes, Veli Kayyum Han also appeared at the lectures.⁵¹³

The religious commitments of the legionnaires were taken into consideration by the Germans as well. They got an imam in the military units. In some of them, imams fulfilled the position of platoon leader (*Zugführer*) at the same time.⁵¹⁴ Legionnaires paid Imams ten Reichmarks "every ten days."⁵¹⁵ Muhammed Emin el-

⁵¹¹ The POW camp İkrâm Han reports of was called by the Turkestanis Kumlager because of the sand (kum, in Turkish) on the ground of the camp. He did not know the exact place of it. The POWs were transferred to a larger camp in Kraków afterwards. It is predictable that a training took place, at least in the most of the POW camps, before the Turkestanis became legionnaires. See, İkrâm Han, p. 113-114.

⁵¹² Crane, p. 91.

⁵¹³ Crane, p. 92.

⁵¹⁴ Romanko, "The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945," p. 52; Crane, pp 100-101.

⁵¹⁵ Romanko, "The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,"

Hüseyni, Mufti of Jerusalem,⁵¹⁶ visited the camps of the Muslims and encouraged them for the holy war against the “infidel.” Unlike in the POW camps, the legionnaires got political training as well at the legion barracks, at the end of which they received their “national banner.”⁵¹⁷ An oath was sworn by the legionnaires, in which they openly said that the legionnaires were fighting against Bolshevism, and would be loyal to Adolf Hitler.⁵¹⁸

Like it had been by the first volunteer formations or Hiwis, the uniforms of the legionnaires became a specific issue for the German high command. Since the legions were more complicated official bodies, the issue went beyond uniforms: the soldiers had to be equipped, armed and trained in order to fight against the Soviet Union under the ranks of the Wehrmacht. However, the official plans of the German authorities and practice differed from each other considerably. The legionnaires used both originally German weapons and the captured equipment from the Red Army during the war. The uniforms they wore were worse in quality than the ones worn by the German soldiers. Also, like it had been by the Hiwis, they carried a special insignia on the uniforms.⁵¹⁹

In the above-mentioned instructions of the April 24, 1942, it was foreseen that the legionnaires should wear the famous “field gray,” the official German uniform. However, the practice again diverged from this. Although the non-Russian

p. 52.

⁵¹⁶ El-Hüseyni had become the head of the Islamisches Zentral-Institut zu Berlin e.V. (Islamic Central-Institute in Berlin), which was established on December 12, 1942. He introduced himself to Göbbels as being the leader of 400 million Arabs and an enemy of Jews, English and Bolsheviks. He was paid by the Foreign Office 90,000 Reichsmarks monthly. Seidler, p. 266.

⁵¹⁷ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 53.

⁵¹⁸ Baymirza Hayit states in one of his articles that the Turkestani legionnaires swore on Hitler and German people as well. Hayit, “Türkistan Legionında Milliy Propagandamız,” in *Milli Türkistan Hürriyet Davası: “Milli Türkistan” Mecmuasında Bildirilgan Fikirler* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2004), p. 18. See appendix for the oath. Williamson, p. 59.

⁵¹⁹ Von zur Mühlen, p. 54. See appendix for illustrations.

legionnaires were given German uniforms, a difference from the regular ones could clearly be seen. Nevertheless, one can say that the ethnically non-Russians were higher in the hierarchy than the Russians, Byelorussians and the Ukrainians, in the eyes of the German officers. This is because they were given the right to carry the Hoheitsabzeichen (emblem) on their shoulders, like the Cossacks in the Wehrmacht.

The issue of the badges of the ranks was another issue that engaged the German commanders. The badges and the chevrons of the legionnaires were drawn in such a manner that it was impossible to compare the ranks with the ones of the Wehrmacht. The ranks of the legionnaire officers did not give them place among the official ranks (Dienstrang) of the Wehrmacht. These ranks were only for official positions (Dienststellung).⁵²⁰ The authority of the legionnaire officers and NCOs were weakened. They had no commanding rights over the German officers ranking below them. This resulted with common severe strives.⁵²¹

Also, all legionnaires were carrying on their right shoulders their national legion insignias. On the first version of Turkestan Legion's insignia, taking into account the wishes of the volunteers, the Shah-i Zinda mosque was portrayed with "Biz Alla Bilen (God with us)" and "Turkistan" scripts on it. On another version of the Turkestan Legion's insignia, again over the Shah-i Zinda mosque, wrote "Tanri Biz Menen! (God with us!)" and "Turkistan."⁵²²

⁵²⁰ The ranks carried by the legionnaire officers were: *Stellvertretende Gruppenführer*, *Gruppenführer*, *Stellvertretende Zugführer*, *Zugführer*, and (from June 2, 1942 onwards) *Kompanieführer*. An exact comparison with the US, British or even today's German Army ranks is almost impossible, therefore the ranks are given in original German categorization. Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen*, p. 35.

⁵²¹ Von Mende, "Erfahrungen...", pp. 28-29.

⁵²² The version of the insignia with the script "Tanri biz menen!" was published in German journal *Signal*, in December 1943. See, Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 7. See appendices for the insignias of Turkestan, Azerbaijani and Caucasian Legions and Turkestani Waffen-SS units.

The personnel in the Eastern Legions were ordered to be composed of seven to twenty five per cent German soldiers. In practice, the ratio reached to maximum fifteen per cent. The legionnaire officers were planned to be trained in German war academies. Here, again the practice and plans differed: only five Caucasian volunteers of the Sonderverband Bergmann graduated from the War Academy in Dresden. This effort was not to be repeated again. Instead, to train officers and NCOs, the German authorities strove for the creation of the seminars special for the “volunteers.” These efforts had been subject for severe criticism, on the ground that they were tentative, conducted with a hesitation and based on German appraisal methods.⁵²³

While their counterparts in the Red Army considerably lacked arms and equipment, each of the armed Eastern Legion Battalions possessed three anti-tank guns (45 millimeters), fifteen light and heavy mortars, fifty two light and heavy machine guns, rifles and sub-machine guns.⁵²⁴

The battalions of the Turkestan Legion in Legionowo was preparing for battle by marching and physical training every day. The legionnaires got rations much more than they did in the POW camps. They received salaries too: during their stay in Poland, they were paid 24 Zlots per month. During the departure to the front, the soldiers got 12.5 Reichsmarks per ten days.⁵²⁵

At the end of June 1942, when the 452nd Turkestan Battalion was sent from Legionowo to Jedlina, its personnel were dressed like German soldiers. They were in dark green uniforms, black boots, and field caps. In order to be distinguished from the German soldiers, however, on their blouses they carried dark blue

⁵²³ Von Mende, “Erfahrungen...”, p. 29.

⁵²⁴ Drobyazko and Karaschuk, p. 5

⁵²⁵ G. N. Vzvarova, p. 41.

buttonholes. Their shoulder straps were also colored, and bordered with white materials.⁵²⁶

In Jedlina, tactical exercises were conducted by the legionnaires. Every day, shooting practices with rifles were done.⁵²⁷ The legionnaires sometimes participated in sports events, such as running, sprint and other athletic events. The legion teams of different nationalities played football against each other as well.⁵²⁸

For the wounded and disabled legionnaires, a medical centre was established in Kielce. However, there were no German doctors and no instruments for treatment. Turkic doctors worked there. Their demands for implants were turned down by the German authorities on the ground that they were preserved for the German soldiers exclusively.⁵²⁹

The religious rituals and needs of Turkic legionnaires in the German Army and the Waffen-SS were not omitted by the German authorities. For instance, a report of the “SS and Police High Command” in Eastern Krakow⁵³⁰ to the SS Main Office in Berlin stated that the Muslims in the Turkic units could sacrifice animals.⁵³¹

In Dresden, a Mullah school was opened on November 26, 1944.⁵³² German propaganda claimed that the only great power on the world, which did not oppress

⁵²⁶ Vzvarova, p. 41.

⁵²⁷ The shooting practices were done with two to five rifle cartridges per training. See, Vzvarova, p. 41.

⁵²⁸ Hayit, “Türkistan Legionında Milliy Propagandamız,” p. 19.

⁵²⁹ Even wood was not provided for the legionnaires to cut implants from them, on the ground that the wood was necessary for the building airplanes. Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 137.

⁵³⁰ *Höhere SS und Polizeiführer Ost Krakau*.

⁵³¹ Miscellaneous SS Records: The Einwandererzentralstelle, Waffen-SS, and SS-Oberabschnitte. Washington: NA, Microcopy, T-354/161/3806954.

⁵³² Document of Amtsgruppe-D, Oststelle, “Zusammenfassung der Ansprache von SS-Brigadeführer Schellenberg.” Berlin, November 29, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695610.

Muslims, was Germany.⁵³³ Mehmet Emin Resulzade decided to come from Wien to work as “dogmatics teacher” at the Mullah-school, after consulting with Prof. von Mende.⁵³⁴

7.5 The National Turkestan Union Committee and Veli Kayyum Han

Along with the establishment of the Eastern Legions, national committees of the various nationalities came into being. In practice, these committees had no authority over the non-Russian peoples and POWs. They were mainly founded for propaganda purposes. But as time went by, these institutions became “semi-autonomous.” Some of them even behaved as “provisional governments,” although they got no such permission in theory.⁵³⁵

When the World War II began, Veli Kayyum Han was in Berlin and Mustafa Çokay in Paris. Gestapo arrested both on June 22, 1941, the very day when the first guns fired at the Eastern Front. Also, all the non-Russian émigrés were arrested at the same day.⁵³⁶

After Veli Kayyum Han was released, he received a letter from Maria Çokayeva.⁵³⁷ Thereupon, he contacted Gerhard von Mende, reached to Paris and facilitated the release of Çokay.⁵³⁸ In July 1941, Veli Kayyum and Çokay went to Berlin. It would be a mistake to say that there was a “sense of togetherness” among

⁵³³ Speech of SS-Brigadier Schellenberg for “Eastern Turkic Newspaper.” NA, T-175/162/2695609. Full speech delivered in the opening ceremony on November 26, 1944. NA, T-175/162/1695611; T-175/162/1695612; T-175/162/1695613; T-175/162/1695614; T-175/162/1695615.

⁵³⁴ Document of *Der Reichsführer-SS*, SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office) – Amtsgruppe D, “Rücksprache mit Professor von Mende,” Berlin, October 12, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695662.

⁵³⁵ Littlejohn, p. 250.

⁵³⁶ Veli Kayyum Han, “Mustafa Caqajni Eslas,” p. 22

⁵³⁷ Maria J. Çokayeva, *Mustafa Çokay’ın Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Turan Kültür Vakfı, 2000), pp. 184-189.

⁵³⁸ Kayyum Han, “Mustafa Caqajni Eslas (Hatıra Daftardan),” p. 22.

the émigré Turks at the time being. For instance, a Turkestan nationalist, Çokay was not in good terms with the Turkish Ambassador to Berlin Hüsrev Gerede and Ahmet Temir.⁵³⁹ However, one can say that many of the Turks and Turkestan nationalists became hopeful about the fate of Turkestan and its independence.

Çokay and Veli Kayyum learned in mid-August that Germans held the Turkestanis as POWs. With the Caucasians, they got permission to visit the POW camps at the end of August. Çokay went to Hannover with the Caucasians, while Veli Kayyum went to Suwałki, Poland with a German officer.⁵⁴⁰ In December 1941, Mustafa Çokay caught typhus in one of the POW camps and died shortly afterwards.⁵⁴¹ Here, it should be added that there was not enough evidence to say that Çokay was willing to work with Germans. Though he joined the works in the POW commissions, it should be remembered that he was arrested by the Germans and to “forced” for collaboration. After two visits to the POW camps, he died.

With the help of Rosenberg’s “goodwill,” Veli Kayyum Han achieved the leadership of the Turkestani nationalists and the Turkestanis on the German side. He also got the support of the Gerhard von Mende at the Ostministerium for his political aims, which were unification and independence of Turkestanis. Obviously, he got a special place among the non-Russians and eastern émigrés, since he got the permission of the first “National Union Committee” under the auspices of German authorities.⁵⁴² Also, in July 1941, Georg Leibbrandt, who was on good terms with Veli Kayyum Han, was brought to the head of Political Branch at the newly

⁵³⁹ Ülküsal, pp. 294-296. Ahmet Temir was born in Emlet, Crimea in 1912. He emigrated to Turkey in 1929. While studying at the Ankara University, he was sent to Germany and studied Philosophy.

⁵⁴⁰ Veli Kayyum Han, “Mustafa Caqajni Eslas...” p. 23.

⁵⁴¹ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 529. The report of the Viktoria Hospital in Schöenberg, Berlin reported that Mustafa Çokay died of typhus on December 27, 1941. For a copy of the document, See, Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 504.

⁵⁴² Seidler, p. 278.

founded Ostministerium. This, combined with his good relations with Prof. von Mende, provided Kayyum Han for a privileged place among other national representatives.⁵⁴³

Veli Kayyum Han gained the permission for the foundation of a Turkestanische Mittelstelle (Turkestan Center) from Gerhard von Mende after long negotiations since the beginning of 1942. The *Milli Türkistan Birlik Komitesi* or Nationalturkestanische Einheitskomitee (National Turkestan Union Committee) was founded in August 1942, as a result of these undertakings of Veli Kayyum Han. The Committee was composed of the former soldiers of the Red Army and had the claim to represent the five nations of Central Asia, which were: Uzbeks, Kazaks, Kirgizs, and Turkmens. The Ostministerium financially supported it.

The headquarters of the Committee was in the “residential section of Berlin,” in an apartment, with some other “liberation organizations and exile governments.”⁵⁴⁴ The Committee also possessed a broadcasting department in another part of Berlin,⁵⁴⁵ as well as a war department and an academic department. Hayit stated that the Committee was planned to be the future Turkestani government.⁵⁴⁶

What needs especially to be stated here was that the independence plans of Turkestan did not bother the German Lebensraum. Also, the overly anti-Russian attitude of the *Milli Türkistan Birlik Komitesi* could be set as a good example for other nations of the Soviet Union in favor of Germany.⁵⁴⁷ On the other hand, the

⁵⁴³ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 530.

⁵⁴⁴ Crane, pp. 118-119.

⁵⁴⁵ Crane, p. 119.

⁵⁴⁶ Hayit, “Biznin Istıqlal,” pp. 7-12.

⁵⁴⁷ Seidler, p. 278.

Committee was not given an independent status despite the endeavors of Veli Kayyum Han.

The preparations for the Kurultay (General Assembly) of the *Milli Türkistan Birlik Komitesi* began by May 1944. Members from the Committee were sent to all Turkestani troops and workers' battalions. Delegates were selected from among them.⁵⁴⁸ On June 8, 1944, all delegates convened in Wien. Personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Germany, Ministry for the East, and high-ranking officers were also present at the Assembly.⁵⁴⁹

The poem named *Gözel Fergana* (Beautiful Fergana) of the Turkestani poet Çolpan was adopted as *Gözel Türkistan* (Beautiful Turkestan) to Turkestan as whole. This was read at the beginning of the Assembly by the delegates. According to the will of the legionnaires, the *Gözel Türkistan* poem was accepted as the national anthem of Turkestan.⁵⁵⁰

Hitler sent congratulatory message to the Kurultay with a telegraph to Veli Kayyum Han. The Assembly ended on June 8, 1944. It elected seventy representatives to the "National Parliament." With the end of the Assembly, German government recognized *Milli Türkistan Birlik Komitesi* and *Türkistan Milli Vakitli Hükümeti* (Turkestan National Provisional Government). The Turkestan Legion became the official Army of Turkestan according to German authorities.⁵⁵¹

7.5.1 Adlon Conference

A conference, convened in the Adlon Hotel in Berlin in the end of April 1942, was an important milestone regarding the Caucasus, Turkestan and Turkey

⁵⁴⁸ İkrām Han, p. 129.

⁵⁴⁹ İkrām Han, p. 133.

⁵⁵⁰ See Appendix for the full text of the poem *Gözel Türkistan*. İkrām Han, p. 133.

⁵⁵¹ İkrām Han, p. 135.

policies of Germany. Nicknamed as “Adloniade”, the conference was organized by Graf von der Schulenburg, the former German Ambassador to Moscow with participation of émigrés from the Soviet Union⁵⁵² as well as from France, Romania and Turkey.⁵⁵³

Here, the disagreement between the Ostministerium and the *Auswärtiges Amt* surfaced again. Rosenberg complained that the “Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs claimed the political handling of the Eastern territories.”⁵⁵⁴ He said to Hitler on May 8, 1942 that the Foreign Ministry formed a large Eastern Committee and despite the protests of the Rosenberg’s Ministry, they called various émigrés to take part in it. Rosenberg read to Hitler the list of the émigrés staying at the Adlon Hotel. He further stated that two of the participants were well-known espionage agents and it was risky to convene all these men in Berlin. The *Führer* listened to him “in surprise.”⁵⁵⁵

Participants of the Conference were of special importance. From Azerbaijan, Mehmet Emin Resulzade, leader of Musavat; Halil Has Mehmet, who was known to be an opponent to Resulzade and former Minister; Fuat Emircan, a friend of Halil Has Mehmet; Mir Yakup Mehtiyev, Northern Caucasus Correspondent of the *Promété* Journal and a member of the Musavat movement, were invited. Said Şamil and the members of the Kavkaz movement Haydar Bammat and Alihan Kantemir represented the Northern Caucasus region. Also Georgian émigré leaders were present at the Conference.

⁵⁵² Seidler, p. 278.

⁵⁵³ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 517.

⁵⁵⁴ Document No. 1520-PS, “Notes about a discussion with the Führer at the Führer Headquarters,” May 8, 1942, the Avalon Project.

⁵⁵⁵ Document No. 1520-PS, “Notes about a discussion with the Führer at the Führer Headquarters,” May 8, 1942, the Avalon Project.

Nobody from Crimea was officially invited to the conference. But the German attack already aroused hopes of the émigrés in Turkey. Cafer Seyidahmet Kırimer, the leader of the Crimean independence movement at the time, encouraged his two friends Edige Kırimal and Müstecip Ülküsal to go to Berlin. They arrived in Berlin on December 2, 1941, and the next day visited İdris Alimcan Bey, who worked at the German Foreign Ministry.⁵⁵⁶ At their meeting with von Mende under a cool atmosphere, they were informed that Crimea was not properly invaded at that time and therefore not included to any Reichskommissariat. But it was a strong possibility that it would be included to the Ukraine Reichskommissariat.⁵⁵⁷

From Turkey, Zeki Velidi Togan was invited, but he could not get the permission to leave Turkey. Nuri Killigil, the brother of famous Enver Pasha, who was also in Berlin at the time, contacted personally to the émigré leaders participating at the Conference and gave them advices about the strategy to be followed.⁵⁵⁸ The aim of the conference was to coordinate the separatist trends among the émigré communities. Representing the Turkestan nationalists, Veli Kayyum Han had the leading role in the speeches.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ With the help of İdris Alimcan Bey, Müstecip Ülküsal and Edige Kırimal contacted to Werner Otto von Hentig, former head of the Orientabteilung (Branch for the Orient) of the *Auswärtiges Amt* (until 1939), and Major of the 11st Army (Krim). See, Bestand: ED 113 Hentig, Werner Otto von, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München – Berlin for detailed information; Fritz Grobba, delegate of the *Auswärtiges Amt* for Arab Countries; Gerhard von Mende; Ahmet Temir; Mufti of Jerusalem Emin el Hüseyini; and Turkish Ambassador to Berlin Hüsrev Gerede. See Ülküsal, pp. 282-302.

⁵⁵⁷ Despite their demands to go to Crimea, von Mende told them that the Tatars were regarded there as “wild like it had been in the thirteenth century” and the political situation was not in favor of them, therefore they could not go to Crimea. Ülküsal, pp. 292-294.

⁵⁵⁸ Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, pp. 518-519.

⁵⁵⁹ Seidler, p. 278.

Here, Gerhard von Mende was sympathetic to the non-Russian elements of the Soviet Union. Like it had been about the Ostpolitik in general; disagreement about Turkey policies of the Germans became apparent in this conference.⁵⁶⁰

7.6 Publications and Literature of Turkestanis

First initiatives to publish a newspaper for the Turkestanis and Muslims in the Waffen-SS began early in March 1944. The first volume of the Ostmuselmanische-SS-Zeitung (Eastern Muslim SS-Newspaper) appeared in April 1944 as an extra edition for the newspaper Jani [Yeni] *Türkestan* (New Turkestan).⁵⁶¹ Herrmann wrote to the SS-Main Office that in accordance with the proposal of Veli Kayyum Han, the name of the newspaper should be “[The newspaper of the] *Türkestanisches SS-Regiment*,” instead of “Eastern Muslim SS-Regiment” for the sake of the cooperation of Turkestanis.⁵⁶² In July 1944, the Turkestani officers of the Eastern Muslim Waffen-SS Regiment demanded the newspaper to be extended and extra editions for Azerbaijanis and Crimean Tatars to be published nearby.⁵⁶³ Thus, works for the publication of an “Eastern Turkic newspaper” began in early September 1944.⁵⁶⁴

By January 1945, two Turkic newspapers were published: *Türk Birliği* (Union of Turks) and *Hücum* (Attack). *Türk Birliği*, which was started to be

⁵⁶⁰ Dallin, pp. 231-238.

⁵⁶¹ Document of the *Reichsführer-SS*, SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office). “Ostmuselmanische-SS-Zeitung,” April 4, 1944. NA, T-175/162/1695681 and From Herrmann to SS-Main Office. “Zeitung f. d. Ostmuselman. SS – Rgt.,” March 11, 1944, NA, T-175/162/1695682.

⁵⁶² “Zeitung f. d. Ostmuselman. SS – Rgt.,” NA, T-175/162/2695682.

⁵⁶³ This demand was signed by Azeri SS-Lieutenant Alekberli, Turkestani SS-Lieutenant Alimov and Crimean Tatar SS-Second Lieutenant Dairisky. See, “Zeitung des 1. Ostmuselmanischen SS-Rgt.,” July 30, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695683.

⁵⁶⁴ Document of the SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office), Amtsgruppe-D. “Herausgabe der Osttürkischen Zeitung,” October 5, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695685; Meeting between Dr. Husten, Wynands, Sonnenfeld and Rahs at the Deutscher Verlag. “Osttürkisch [sic.] Zeitung,” Berlin, September 20, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695687, T-175/162/2695688.

published on November 25, 1944, was given off in two editions: Krim (Crimea) and Idel-Ural.⁵⁶⁵ The Edition Turkestan was added to these later.⁵⁶⁶ *Hücum* was an alternative for the Azerbaijani newspaper, which was published in association with the Caucasian newspapers.

The *Türk Birliği* got a four-page general part in five dialects of the Turkestani language.⁵⁶⁷ These were: “Turkestanish” [i.e. Uzbek], Volga-Tatar, Azerbaijani, Crimean Tatar and Chuvash languages.⁵⁶⁸ The title of the newspaper stood between a wolf-head and a crescent-and-star.⁵⁶⁹ The general part was followed by the enclosures in different dialects.⁵⁷⁰ The language of literature had been a problem, which could not be resolved.⁵⁷¹ Germans, it is understood,

⁵⁶⁵ By December 2, 1944, the newspaper was published in two editions. Document of the *Reichsführer-SS*, SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office), Amtsgruppe-D. “Zeitung für den Osttürkischen Waffenverband der SS.” December 2, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695603 and T-175/162/2695604.

⁵⁶⁶ The newspaper *Türk Birliği* had German and Turkic redactors. General Editor of the Journal was Wynands. Turkic redactors of the Journal were: Tınışbek (redactor for the general part of the newspaper); Karabaş (Redactor for the Edition Krim); Nigmati (Redactor for the Edition Idel-Ural); Umari (Redactor for the Edition Turkestan); Kasiyev (Redactor for Azeri language). Nigmati was described as the “politically most trustful men in the newspaper.” Document of SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office) “Betr. Gegenwärtigen Zustand der Osttürkischen Zeitungen,” Berlin, January 4, 1945. NA, T-175/162/2695588; NA, T-175/162/2695589; NA, T-175/162/2695590. Umari was described as an “undisciplined men, who had antipathy towards Veli Kayyum Han and Turkestan Committee.” See, “Usbekischer Mitarbeiter für die türkestanische Zeitung des SS-Hauptamtes, Umari, Nachkam.” Berlin, November 21, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695597 and T-175/162/2695598.

⁵⁶⁷ In the first volume of the *Türk Birliği*, the “Kurban Ayt (Feast of Sacrifice)” of the Muslims was congratulated. The Grand Mufti calls all Muslims for fight “for the just thing.” The Eastern Turkic people were called for fight against Bolshevism until full independence of Turkestan by the Redactor. See, “Zeitung für den Osttürkischen Waffenverband der SS.” NA, T-175/162/2695603 and T-175/162/2695604.

⁵⁶⁸ Document of the *Reichsführer-SS*, SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office), Amtsgruppe D, “Herausgabe einer Zeitung für den Osttürkischen Verband,” Berlin, November 9, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695671, T-175/162/2695673.

⁵⁶⁹ Document of Amtsgruppe D – Oststelle, “Titelkopf der osttürkischen Zeitung,” Berlin, October 20, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695667 and T-175/162/2695668.

⁵⁷⁰ The title of the general part proposed by Prof. von Mende was “*Türk Birliğinin Mecmuası* (Journal of Turkish Union).” See, “Rücksprache mit Professor von Mende,” NA, T-175/162/2695662. This was changed to “*Türk Birliğinin Gazetası* (Newspaper of Turkish Union).” Under the title, it was written (with smaller fonts): “*Şark Türk Birliği Silahlı SS-nin cengâver gazetası* (Battle newspaper of the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment).” “*Türk*” was used instead of “Turk,” since the latter was used by the Russians. See, “Titelkopf der osttürkischen Zeitungen,” Berlin, October 23, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695665.

⁵⁷¹ “Betr. Gegenwärtigen Zustand der Osttürkischen Zeitungen,” NA, T-175/162/2695588; Document of Amtsgruppe D – Oststelle, “Osttürkische Zeitung – Literatursprache,” Berlin, November 3, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695660 and Document of Amtsgruppe D – Oststelle, “Osttürkische

proposed formation of a “language commission,” which was also accepted by Veli Kayyum Han.⁵⁷² The head of the commission Urasai would be in connection with Dr. Johannes Benzing.⁵⁷³

In two meetings held on October 31 and December 9, 1944, the commission discussed with German authorities the alphabet and language to be used in the Turkic-newspapers. National Turkestan Union Committee expressed its objections to the alphabet and language. At the meeting, the report of Dr. Benzing was discussed, according to which it was necessary to use the Latin alphabet in the journal *Türk Birliği*. The participants all accepted the use of the Latin alphabet and “Turkestanish” as the language.⁵⁷⁴ However, especially the non-Turkestani redactors of the *Türk Birliği* found this language hard to understand.⁵⁷⁵

Since the military situation in the Eastern Front changed, newspapers of the Eastern Turkic peoples were re-organized in January 1945.⁵⁷⁶ The main objective of the publications was set as to “raise the morale of the Turkic volunteers” and “win further volunteers.” The union of the Eastern Turks could only be an instrument in

Zeitung – Literatursprache,” Berlin, November 2, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695661.

⁵⁷² Kayyum Han suggested Tınışbek (Kazak), Şırat (Uzbek) and Anayar (Turkmen) for the commission. Document of the *Reichsführer-SS*, SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office), Amtsgruppe D, “Sprachkommission,” Berlin, December 12, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695674.

⁵⁷³ Benzing was the director of the *Abteilung für Linguistik an der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Turkestan* (Department for Linguistics at the Turkestan Workshop). The members of the commission became, on the orders of the SS-Main Office: Tatar Urasay (also head of the commission), Turkmen Kurban, Crimean Tatar Karabaş, Azeri Mahmedov, Kazak Tınışbek, Uzbek Şıratov. See the document of the *Reichsführer-SS*, SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office), Amtsgruppe D, “Besprechung mit Herrn Urasai betreffend Sprachkommission,” Berlin, September 9, 1944, NA, T-175/162/2695699.

⁵⁷⁴ The alphabet was used, according to Benzing, in Turkestan between 1928 and 1935. Protokoll No. 1 and Protokoll No. 2, NA, T-175/162/2695543; NA, T-175/162/2695551; NA, T-175/162/2695552.

⁵⁷⁵ “Betr. Gegenwärtigen Zustand der Osttürkischen Zeitungen,” NA, T-175/162/2695588.

⁵⁷⁶ The newspaper was published and financed by the SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office). Political and redaction courses were held by the SS-Main Office as well.

reaching the ultimate aim.⁵⁷⁷ The redaction and management of the newspapers were tried to be set directly under Waffen-SS influence.⁵⁷⁸

German commanders also paid attention to the non-humiliation of the Turkic volunteers, especially in the Waffen-SS. Fritz Rudolf Arlt⁵⁷⁹ particularly stated in one of his requests, that the SS-publications of the Germans should not hurt the “eastern peoples” and their committees.⁵⁸⁰ It can be said, on the other hand, that Turkestani authors were influenced by German propaganda and ideology. Contrary to common practice of blaming Russians only, Baymirza Hayit blamed in his articles the Jews along with the Russians for the current situation in Turkestan.⁵⁸¹

7.7 Legionnaires Switching to the Side of the Red Army and Allies Again

As stated above, “volunteering” was an important question for the recruitment to the legions. Some legionnaires were recruited against their will or they decided to join the ranks of Wehrmacht under harsh conditions of POW camps. Also, as Neulen stated, the legionnaires were insulted by the German soldiers. They were not counted as their counterparts. There had been cases, in which the “volunteers” were even used as “shelters” against the air bombings.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷ Document of SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office), Berlin, January 22, 1945. NA, T-175/162/2695579; NA, T-175/162/2695580; NA, T-175/162/2695581; NA, T-175/162/2695582; NA, T-175/162/2695583.

⁵⁷⁸ From the SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office) to the Deutscher Verlag (German Publication), Berlin, January 22, 1945. NA, T-175/162/2695584; NA, T-175/162/2695585; NA, T-175/162/2695586; NA, T-175/162/2695587.

⁵⁷⁹ Fritz Rudolf Arlt (1912-2004) joined NSDAP and SA in 1932. In 1937, he became *Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer* (High SS and Police Leader) in Oberschleisen. The head of the SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office) commissioned him for the establishment of *Freiwilligen Leitstelle Ost* (Volunteer-Administration East) in June 1941.

⁵⁸⁰ From Fritz Arlt to von Grote, March 19, 1945. Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police. Washington: NA, Microcopy, T-175/162/2695538.

⁵⁸¹ Hayit, “Türkistanda Bloşevizimnin Yırtıcı Propagandası,” *Millij Türkistan* (December 15, 1942, Vol. 11), pp. 1-9.

⁵⁸² Neulen, p. 329.

As a consequence, some of the legionnaires switched to the side of the Red Army again, if they found a chance to do so. The number of these occasions should not be exaggerated, since the total ratio of deserters from the volunteers of the Soviet Union was eight to ten per cent in 1943. This ratio decreased to two to three per cent in 1945.⁵⁸³ For instance, from the 781st Turkestan Battalion, 43 soldiers changed sides second time in their military careers and went back to Soviet Army.⁵⁸⁴ Colonel Heinz Danko Herre would find out later on that the volunteers, who changed side, were 1,300 men, equivalent to 1.5 per cent of the all volunteers on German side.⁵⁸⁵ Germans disbanded the unreliable units. Alternatively, the combat units were made “labor-battalions” and used in constructing works.⁵⁸⁶

Sometimes, the defection of the legionnaires was more organized. Some loyal former Red Army soldiers clandestinely prepared for a transfer of a whole unit to the Soviet side again. The attempt of 825th Volga-Tatar Battalion in Vitebsk⁵⁸⁷ to switch sides in February 1943 resulted in success. In another case, on September 13, 1943, a Turkestan Battalion in Obolon⁵⁸⁸ killed its German commanders and soldiers of three companies. With their weapons and ammunition, they went over to Soviet side.⁵⁸⁹

On September 13, 1943, the operation of German forces in Kursk failed. Himmler reported to Hitler that some Russian volunteers in the front proved

⁵⁸³ Neulen, p. 330.

⁵⁸⁴ In a battalion there were 800 to 1000 men. Thus, the soldiers, who switched side, corresponded to four to five per cent of total strength of the battalion.

⁵⁸⁵ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 280.

⁵⁸⁶ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 57.

⁵⁸⁷ Vitebsk is a city in located in the north of today’s Belarus.

⁵⁸⁸ Obolon is a district of Kiev, today’s capital of the Ukraine.

⁵⁸⁹ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 60.

“politically unreliable.”⁵⁹⁰ Hitler ordered Wilhelm Keitel, the head of the OKW, disbanding of all Russian units. A total number of 80,000 men would be unarmed at first phase. The personnel would be transported to France to work in the coal mines⁵⁹¹ and as guards of railroads, camps and roads.⁵⁹²

As a result, the Legions in Poland were disorganized at the end of 1943. Some of them were re-organized, and some of them were sent to West Europe, to other fronts, where they could not meet with their countrymen.⁵⁹³ On March 1, 1944, the Oberbefehlshaber West (Commander-in-Chief in the West) reported over sixty thousand foreigners and members of Osttruppen under his authority. The units were stationed as far as possible from each other.⁵⁹⁴

By the beginning of 1944, seventy two battalions were transported to France. Major General von Wartenberg took over the command of the units⁵⁹⁵ in Paris. Even the officer school in Marijampolė, Lithuania was transported to Conflans, France. All battalions would be included into German regiments as third or fourth battalions, in order to “minimize their riskiness.” Also, Niedermayer left his place to Wartenberg.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁰ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 273-274.

⁵⁹¹ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 274. Hitler reduced the number to 50,000 men later on. Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 280.

⁵⁹² Schedule B / Vol. 8, Case 160, The Harvard Project, p. 21.

⁵⁹³ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 60.

⁵⁹⁴ The exact number was 61,439. See, Neulen, p. 331.

⁵⁹⁵ *Kommando der Freiwilligenverbände beim Oberbefehlshaber West*.

⁵⁹⁶ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 304-306. In August 1944, because of Niedermayer’s criticism of Hitler’s Eastern politics, he was arrested by the Germans and tried for treason. He was released in May 1945, but arrested this time by the Soviets on the way home. He was sent to a Soviet labor camp and died in Vladimir in September 1948. See, Von zur Mühlen, p. 231.

The mutinies continued after the above-mentioned orders of Hitler as well. In late summer 1944, a unit composed of Kazaks and Kirgizs rebelled in Albania. They switched to Allied side.⁵⁹⁷

7.8 Turkestanis in the Waffen-SS

After the Eastern Troops in the German Army and their commanders were discredited, some of these displaced officers sought a second chance in the Waffen-SS for the continuation of the adventure with the Soviet POWs. One of such officers was Andreas Mayer-Mader. At the end of 1943, he was allowed to establish a Turkestani regiment from the POWs for the second time, this time under auspices of the Waffen-SS.⁵⁹⁸

The *Reichsführer*-SS, Feld-Kommandostelle (SS-High Command, Field-Headquarters), sent a request signed by Himmler himself to General Kurt Zeitzler, Chief of the Staff of the OKH at the time in November 1943. It stated that using the “Eastern Muslims,” to create a big formation with the 450th Infantry Battalion of Mayer-Mader and to train them politically was possible, so that the unit would be trustful in action.⁵⁹⁹

Mayer-Mader met with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem to ensure the spiritual legitimating of the fight against the Russia and Bolshevism once again. Then, on December 14, 1943, he met with three Turkestani officers of the former 480th Turkestan Battalion.⁶⁰⁰ Mayer-Mader got “grand” plans in mind: he wanted to

⁵⁹⁷ Neulen, pp. 331-332.

⁵⁹⁸ Littlejohn, p. 253.

⁵⁹⁹ The document was sent to Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Main Office for Defence), SS-Hauptamt (SS-Mainoffice), SS-Führungshauptamt (SS-Leadership Main Office). NA, T-175/21/2526502; T-175/21/2526503; T-175/21/2526507.

⁶⁰⁰ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, pp. 75-76.

transport his division into Turkestan with planes in order to trigger a rebellion there.⁶⁰¹

The regiment of Mayer-Mader rebelled in March 1944.⁶⁰² A document from the *Reichsführer-SS* dated January 31, 1944 stated that only five hundred Turkic people from the 450th Infantry Battalion of Mayer-Mader were to be preserved as replacement units.⁶⁰³

The SS already gathered some volunteers in France early 1944. These volunteers established a unit, named *Freiwilligen-Stamm Regiment* (Volunteer Cadre Division), made up of a headquarters staff, a school and five “Volunteer Cadre Regiments” of different nationalities from the Soviet Union.⁶⁰⁴ The Volunteer Cadre Regiment No.1 was sent to Neuhammer training camp in Germany on January 1, 1945.⁶⁰⁵ In this unit, I/370th Turkestan Battalion, II/4th Georgian Battalion, I/9th Georgian Battalion, II/4th North Caucasian Battalion were included. These were disbanded in February 1944 and sent to Southern France, to Castres. This unit was then included into the newly created *Kaukasischer Waffen-Verbände der SS* (Caucasian Armed SS Brigade), under establishment in Paluzza.⁶⁰⁶ The commander of the Caucasian SS Brigade was Arved Theurmann.⁶⁰⁷

The Volunteer Cadre Regiment No.2 was consisted of 804th and 806th Azerbaijani Battalions, which were sent to reinforce the 162nd Infantry Division later, II/9th Armenian Battalion, 832nd, 833rd and 834th Volga-Tatar Battalions.

⁶⁰¹ Neulen, p. 332.

⁶⁰² Neulen, p. 332.

⁶⁰³ From *Der Reichsführer-SS, Feld-Kommandostelle, Persönlicher Stab* to Chef des SS-Hauptamtes, SS-Obergruppenführer Berger, January 31, 1944. NA, T-175/21/2526505.

⁶⁰⁴ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 57.

⁶⁰⁵ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 60.

⁶⁰⁶ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 62.

⁶⁰⁷ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 63. See appendix for detailed information about the commanding cadre of the *Kaukasischer Waffen-Verbände der SS*.

These battalions were disbanded in February 1944 and sent to Mende, France.⁶⁰⁸

The personnel of the Volunteer Cadre Regiment No.3 came from 792nd, 794th, 839th, 841st and 842nd Turkestani Battalions. These battalions were also disbanded and sent to Southern France, to Macon in February 1944.⁶⁰⁹

Since Germans were in a difficult position and withdrawing from the occupied territories in 1944, the political or propaganda motivation of the recruiting of the Soviet nationals in the German ranks became less meaningful. The urgent need for manpower in this situation made German authorities recruit men to their side. The political eligibility of the POWs for the Nazi ideology was no more questioned. An order from the SS Main Office dated January 19, 1944 reflects this policy of the German military and political authorities.⁶¹⁰

Systematic propaganda materials directed to the Turkic legionnaires were used to minimize the desertion of the Turkic personnel. In one of the propaganda notes, the German authorities claimed that the enemies of the Germans tried all possibilities to divide Muslims from Germans. The Muslims could only gain their independence in Asia, if Germany would be victorious of the war.⁶¹¹

The Ostministerium was also supporting the recruitment of the Turkestani and other Muslim POWs into the SS ranks. A representative from this Ministry, Alfred Erdmann, went to Romania on May 25, 1944. He met with a representative of SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office) in Bucharest. The aim of the meeting was to ascertain the exact number of the volunteers for the Waffen-SS.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁸ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 62.

⁶⁰⁹ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 62.

⁶¹⁰ NA, T-354/161/3806953.

⁶¹¹ NA, T-354/161/3806981; T-354/161/3806982 and T-354/161/3806983.

⁶¹² NA, T-354/161/3806805.

In July 1944, Schareck, an officer in General Staff,⁶¹³ told Herre that the unarmed and disbanded Eastern Legions could be resurrected, if its personnel were assembled under SS organization.⁶¹⁴ On July 10, 1944, Herre went to Köstring and disclosed his plans regarding the SS.⁶¹⁵

It would be Dr. Fritz Rudolf Arlt, a high-ranking officer of the Waffen-SS,⁶¹⁶ who took the initiative of reorganizing the Eastern Legions under the banner of the SS. He had an appointment with Berger in Berlin, in SS-Hauptamt (SS Main Office), where he made his plans open. In July 1944, Arlt was brought to the position *Freiwilligen-Leitselle Ost* (Volunteer-Administration East).⁶¹⁷

The *Amtsgruppe D* (Department D) of the SS-Hauptamt (SS-Main Office) had already lost its “Germanic” character at that time. The first department (Amt I) was the “*Europäische Mittelstelle* (European Center).” The second was “*Germanische Mittelstelle* (Germanic Center).” What was new in the Waffen-SS was the *Freiwilligen-Leitstelle Ost*.⁶¹⁸

Arlt contacted the representatives of the national groups, including also Veli Kayyum Han. He discussed about the disbanded Turkestani units in the Wehrmacht and the creation of a Turkestani SS Division with Kayyum Han. Afterwards, Kayyum Han negotiated this issue with Köstring and Voelkel.⁶¹⁹ He achieved nothing.⁶²⁰

⁶¹³ Schareck was Herre’s *Abwehroffizier* (lit. defense officer; third-ranking officer in general staff in the German Army).

⁶¹⁴ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 309-310.

⁶¹⁵ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, pp. 313-314.

⁶¹⁶ Arlt was *SS-Sturmabführer* (SS-Major). He was promoted to *SS-Obersturmbannführer* (SS-Lieutenant Colonel) later on.

⁶¹⁷ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 318.

⁶¹⁸ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 318.

⁶¹⁹ Voelkel was the successor of Herre.

⁶²⁰ Thorwald, *Die Illusion*, p. 324.

The 450th, 480th and 94th Turkestan Battalions were decided to be disbanded. At first, the 94th Turkestan Battalion was disbanded on December 6, 1943. The 450th Battalion was mustered out on December 18, which was followed by the 480th Battalion. The personnel of these units were transferred to Waffen-SS ranks.

At the same time, Mayer-Mader recruited men from the POWs and workers in the German camps. Consequently, enough men were assembled to raise three battalions for the 1. Ostmusselmanische SS-Regiment (1st Eastern Muslim SS Regiment). The headquarters of the division in formation were in Lublin, Poland. The training camp was in Trawniki, Poland.⁶²¹

After the situation at the Eastern Front worsened for Germans, the authority of the SS grew. The sixth department⁶²² of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, or RSHA in short, (the Main Office for Reich Security) organized a “Turkestan work group,” led by *SS-Hauptsturmführer* (SS-Captain) Reiner Olzscha. This group was, along with other similar “work groups,” was commissioned for recruiting soldiers from POWs. The opening of the above-mentioned Mullah school in Dresden on November 26, 1944 was in connection with these efforts.⁶²³

7.8.1 The Eastern Muslim Waffen-SS Regiment

The former Eastern Troops under command of the German Army were proposed to be transferred under Waffen-SS command by the establishment of the Muslim SS Division Neu Turkistan (New Turkestan). For this, Mayer-Mader was transferred to the Waffen-SS in January 1944 and promoted to

⁶²¹ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 76.

⁶²² The Amt VI – Ausland (Department Nr. VI – Abroad) was the foreign intelligence service of RSHA, led by Walter Schellenberg.

⁶²³ Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” pp. 78-79.

SS-Obersturmbannführer (SS-Lieutenant-Colonel).⁶²⁴ Personnel from the 782nd, 786th, 790th, 791st Turkestani, the 818th Azerbaijani and 831st Volga-Tatar Battalions were transferred to the Waffen-SS under the responsibility of Mayer-Mader.⁶²⁵ Also, the 450th, 480th and I/94th Turkestani Battalions were disbanded and some of their personnel joined to the newly established unit.⁶²⁶ The Turkic volunteers and workers in Germany were also included in this unit, based in Yuratiszki, Belorussia.⁶²⁷ It was exclusively used against partisans beginning from February 1944.⁶²⁸

In early February 1944, the regiment was dispatched to Belorussia for training and anti-partisan fighting purposes.⁶²⁹ Mayer-Mader could not completely ensure discipline in the regiment. For instance, in this month, twenty three Turkic legionnaires in Mayer-Mader's unit were deserted. The OKH requested the disbanding of the "illegally recruited personnel" from the OKH to the 790th Turkestani Infantry Battalion.⁶³⁰ As a result, some of the Turkestani officers went to trial and were punished.⁶³¹

After the death of Mayer-Mader, Captain Billig was brought to the commanding post of the regiment on March 28, 1944. The dissidents in the unit began to be more active from then on. The events turned to a "mutiny" in the

⁶²⁴ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 76; Neulen, p. 332.

⁶²⁵ Romanko, "The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945," p. 81.

⁶²⁶ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 76.

⁶²⁷ The document regarding the transport of the Muslim volunteers from the working camp Strasshof was a clear evidence of this. Until May 15, 1944, the number of the applicants for volunteering reached to 520. NA, T-354/161/3806817 and T-354/161/3806818.

⁶²⁸ Bishop, p. 179; Rikmenspoel, pp. 192-193.

⁶²⁹ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 77.

⁶³⁰ "Oberkommando des Heeres, Chef H. Rüst u BdE to SS-Führungshauptamt" on February 2, 1944, NA, T-354/161/3806782.

⁶³¹ Mayer-Mader was reported to be "killed in action" against the partisans. Littlejohn and Neulen claimed that there is a strong suspicion that "he was shot on orders of the SS command." See, Littlejohn, p. 253 and Neulen, p. 332. Muñoz, on the other hand, claims that he was shot by a partisan sniper in March 1944 near Minsk. Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 77.

regiment, resulting in the shooting of seventy eight men. This led to replacement of Billig by Captain Hermann on April 27, 1944.⁶³²

In May 1944, Germans still endeavored to recruit Muslims to the Waffen-SS. On May 5, 1944, SS Major Karl Leib demanded propaganda material from the SS Main Office for the recruitment of Turkestanis from the POW camps in Norway.⁶³³

Muñoz states that Herrmann could only remain in this post for a week. The regiment was sent back to first Łomża,⁶³⁴ then to Białystok.⁶³⁵ In his telegraph of July 11, 1944 from Białystok, SS-*Rottenführer* (Corporal) Eskender Dairski stated that he was searching the 1st Eastern Muslim SS Regiment. He wrote that Herrmann was dead and his men were marching to Łomża.⁶³⁶ Thus it is arguable that Herrmann should have commanded the regiment until his death indeed. However, it is obvious that there was full uncertainty, when the regiment was marching towards Łomża.

In July 1944, SS-*Sturmabführer* (SS-Major) Harun - el - Raschid⁶³⁷ was brought to the commanding post of the regiment.⁶³⁸ With SS-*Sturmbrigade* Dirlewanger (SS Dirlewanger Penal Brigade)⁶³⁹ this division took part at the

⁶³² Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 77.

⁶³³ An SS-Hauptamt, Amtsgruppe D, Berlin – Grunewald. “Anwerbung von Turkestanern,” NA, T-354/161/3806827.

⁶³⁴ Łomża is a town in the north-east of today's Poland.

⁶³⁵ Białystok is a city in the north-east of today's Poland.

⁶³⁶ NA, T-354/161/3806769.

⁶³⁷ Harun - el - Raschid was born in Austria. His original name was Wilhelm Hintersatz. He was attached to Enver Pasha in the World War I. When he was in the Ottoman Empire, he was converted to Islam. The name Harun - el - Raschid was given him by the Ottoman Sultan. On October 1, 1944, he was promoted to SS-*Standartenführer* (Colonel). See, Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 77.

⁶³⁸ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 77. Though Romanko claims that the Regiment was headed by Uzbek SS-*Obersturmführer* (Lieutenant) Gualm Alimov, when it helped the suppression of Warsaw Uprising. See, Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 81.

⁶³⁹ The official name of this unit was “36th Armed Grenadier Division of the SS.”

suppression of the “Warsaw Uprising” in August 1944. On October 12, 1944, the unit was sent to Slovakia, when the “Slovak National Uprising” occurred.⁶⁴⁰

At the end of October 1944, the Eastern Muslim Waffen-SS Regiment was dispatched to Slovakia. Here, on December 24, 1944, with some of the personnel of the 1st Turkestani Battalion of *Waffen-Obersturmführer der SS* (Waffen-SS Lieutenant) Gulam Alimov switched to the side of the partisans. Alimov brought four to five hundred men together with him. The partisans executed Alimov. Afterwards, many of his men returned to Waffen-SS side.⁶⁴¹

7.8.2 The Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment

Early in May 1944 attempts to establish the *Waffen-Gebirgs-Brigade der SS* (tatarische No. 1) began. This unit would be a collection of the Crimean Tatar Schuma (*Schutzmannschaft* – Security team) battalions.⁶⁴² The regiment of the former officer Mayer-Mader was also included in this unit.⁶⁴³ The formation of the unit was cancelled at the end of 1944.⁶⁴⁴ Its personnel were transferred to the newly founded *Osttürkischer Waffen-Verband der SS*⁶⁴⁵ (The Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment) and *Kaukasischer Waffen-Verband der SS* (The Caucasian Waffen-SS Regiment) by February 1945.⁶⁴⁶

On October 20, 1944, Himmler ordered the establishment of the *Osttürkischer Waffen-Verband der SS* (The Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment).⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁰ See appendix. Bishop, p. 180.

⁶⁴¹ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, pp. 80-81; Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 81. According to National Turkestan Union Committee, Gulam Alim switched to the side of partisans because of the SS plans of setting the National Committees under the responsibility of Vlasov's ROA. See, Von zur Mühlen, p. 166.

⁶⁴² Bishop, p. 179; Rikmenspoel, p. 193.

⁶⁴³ Littlejohn, p. 253.

⁶⁴⁴ Bishop, p. 179; Rikmenspoel, p. 193.

⁶⁴⁵ In December 1944, the unit's strength was 3,518 men. Bishop, p. 179.

⁶⁴⁶ Littlejohn, p. 253.

⁶⁴⁷ This order would be valid from October 1, 1944. *Der Reichsführer-SS, Feld-Kommandostelle*,

It would bring together all available “Eastern Turks”⁶⁴⁸ and their “political and military formation and capacity.”⁶⁴⁹ Harun - el - Raschid was responsible for the establishment of the regiment.⁶⁵⁰

The Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment was organized as a group of regiment-size units. First unit was the “headquarters,” led by Harun - el - Raschid. At the headquarters, he got an adjutant, *SS-Untersturmführer* (SS-Second Lieutenant) Willy Bruckner, an *SS-Hauptsturmführer* (SS-Captain) Meyer-Hertig and an Uzbek assistant for propaganda, *SS-Obersturmführer* (SS-Lieutenant) Nazarov. Second unit was the Waffengruppe Idel-Ural (this was assigned to 3rd Battalion) and the third group was the Waffengruppe “Turkestan” (assigned to headquarters and 1st, 2nd, 6th and 10th Battalions), led by an Uzbek *SS-Untersturmführer* (SS-Second Lieutenant) Tursunov. Fourth unit was the Waffengruppe Krim which was assigned on December 31, 1944 and included personnel from the former *Tataren-Gebirgsjäger-Regiment der SS* (Tatar Mountain Hunter Regiment of SS)⁶⁵¹ (assigned to headquarters 7th, 8th and 9th Battalions). The fifth and last unit was the Waffengruppe “Azerbaijan,” led by an Azerbaijani *SS-*

NA, T-175/70/folder 233/2586542; T-175/70/folder 233/2586543.

⁶⁴⁸ Olzscha commissioned Abdul Gani Osman from the Tatarische Leitstelle (Tatar Management Centre) on October 24, 1944 for searching of Crimean Tatars in the working camps in the occupied lands. The aim of this order was the admittance of the Tatar workers to the newly-founded Waffen-SS Regiment. NA, T-175/164/2697290. The document sent by OKH to the SS-Main Office regarding the transfer of the Crimean Tatars to the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment dated October 27, 1944. NA, T-175/164/2697288. See also, NA, T-175/164/2697291; NA, T-175/164/2697292; NA, T-175/164/2697293; NA, T-175/164/2697294; NA, T-175/164/2697295 for the orders and documents regarding the admission of the Crimean Tatars in the Wehrmacht and working camps to the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment.

⁶⁴⁹ NA, T-175/70/folder 233/2586542; T-175/70/folder 233/2586543.

⁶⁵⁰ NA, T-175/70/folder 233/2586542; T-175/70/folder 233/2586543 and Document of Der *Reichsführer-SS*, Feld-Kommandostelle, October 20, 1944. NA, T-175/70/folder 233/2586545.

⁶⁵¹ When Germans retreated from the Crimean Peninsula, the Tatar Schutzmannschaften (self-defense units) were assigned to the SS, to form the *Tataren-Gebirgsjäger-Regiment der SS* in June 1944. On July 8, 1944, these were re-organized, as mentioned before, as *Waffen-Gebirgsjäger-Brigade der SS* (tatarische No.1). See, Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 82.

Obersturmführer (SS-Lieutenant) Alekberli, assigned in March 1945 (assigned to headquarters and the 4th and 5th Battalions).⁶⁵²

Here, it is necessary to mention that the definition of “Turkestan” and “Turkestani” was slightly different in the Waffen-SS than in the Wehrmacht. An important reason for this was that the commanders of the Turkestani units in the German Army fell out of favor after the disbanding of the Turkestani units and they wanted to establish new and greater units during the retreat of the German Army from the Soviet Union. Thus, Tatar and Azerbaijani soldiers were also included in the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS troops.

The Kaukasischer Waffen-Verband der SS and its training school was stationed in Lyonais, France. This unit was composed of five *Freiwilligen-Stamm* Regiments (Volunteer Cadre Regiments), established by various nationalities.⁶⁵³ In the first regiment, there were North Caucasians, along with Georgians and Turkestanis, in the second regiment, there were Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Volga Tatars.⁶⁵⁴ The third regiment’s personnel were derived from the former 162nd Infantry Division. After June 1944, the soldiers of this regiment were sent to Ukrainian volunteer units to supply them. In the fourth and fifth regiments, Ukrainians and Russians served.⁶⁵⁵

After the above-mentioned incident of Gulam Alim on December 24, 1944, Himmler ordered the reorganization of the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment on

⁶⁵² Littlejohn, p. 253; Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 83.

⁶⁵³ The *Freiwilligen-Stamm* Regiment Nr. 1 was stationed in Castres, while the *Freiwilligen-Stamm* Regiment Nr. 2 in Mende, *Freiwilligen-Stamm* Regiment Nr. 3 in Macon, *Freiwilligen-Stamm* Regiment Nr. 4 in Namur, *Freiwilligen-Stamm* Regiment Nr. 5 in Langres. Muñoz, *Hitler’s Muslims*, p. 57.

⁶⁵⁴ After April 1944, Russians and Ukrainians were added to this unit as well.

⁶⁵⁵ Muñoz, *Hitler’s Muslims*, p. 57.

December 30, 1944.⁶⁵⁶ Harun - el - Raschid was removed from the commanding post of the brigade and replaced by *SS-Hauptsturmführer* (SS-Captain) Fürst.⁶⁵⁷ According to the instructions, each *Waffengruppe* of the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiment would have “two infantry battalions with five infantry companies per battalion.”⁶⁵⁸ These units were to be formed near Mlava, Slovakia. The Eastern Muslim SS Regiment would be included in this newly founded unit and “thereby considered dissolved.”⁶⁵⁹ In January 1945, the Azerbaijani Regiment was transferred to the newly established Caucasian Waffen-SS Regiments in Italy. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Eastern Muslim Waffen-SS Regiment were merged to form the *SS-Waffengruppe Turkistan*.⁶⁶⁰

On January 24, 1945, the *Reichsführer SS* (Head of the SS) assigned the Turkestani *SS-Untersturmführer* (SS-Second Lieutenant) Çorman and the Turkestani *SS-Unterscharführer* (SS-Sergeant) Yunupov for the assistance of transport of the Crimean Tatar Armed Group over Wien. For the assistance of Idel-Ural Armed Group, the Tatar *SS-Hauptsturmführer* (SS-Captain) Kuteyev and the Tatar *SS Rottenführer* (SS-Corporal) Galimov were assigned.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁶ The order was valid by December 15, 1944.

⁶⁵⁷ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, pp. 80-81; Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 81.

⁶⁵⁸ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 82.

⁶⁵⁹ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 82.

⁶⁶⁰ Muñoz, *Hitler's Muslims*, p. 81.

⁶⁶¹ For the assistance of the Turkestanis, it is understood, nobody was available at the time being. For propaganda services, civilian Akçurin was assigned. *Der Reichsführer SS, SS-Hauptamt, Amtsgruppe D – Oststelle “Leitstelle der Osttürkischen Waffenverband der SS,”* January 24, 1945. NA, T-175/162/2695376.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

8.1 The End of the World War II and the Fate of Turkestanis

The end of the story was not necessarily the same for all the legions and legionnaires. Some legions were disbanded when the war had ended. The number of the personnel in some of the legions decreased to a significant degree that they must be dissolved completely.⁶⁶² But most of them were left under the authority of the German Army.⁶⁶³

Germans lost the battles for Crimea in May 1944 against the attacking Red Army. The Wehrmacht was forced to evacuate the peninsula, which was then invaded by the Soviet troops. Some of the Crimean Tatars went to Germany and resided in camps. Emin el Hüseyini, the Grand Mufti, requested from SS-*Obergruppenführer* (SS-Lieutenant-General) Berger, the Chief of the SS-Main Office, that all Crimean Tatars in Germany were to be gathered in a camp. They demanded avoidance from the eastern workers in the working camps.⁶⁶⁴

Towards the end of the war, when the German defeat could clearly be foreseen by the representatives of the Turkestani and Muslim representatives, they

⁶⁶² An example for this kind of legions would be the Armenian Legion.

⁶⁶³ Littlejohn, p. 254.

⁶⁶⁴ From the Grand Mufti to Chef des SS-*Hauptamtes*, SS *Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS* Berger, on October 20, 1944. NA, T-175/164/2697297; NA, T-175/164/2697298; NA, T-175/164/2697299; NA, T-175/164/2697300.

tried to find out ways for preventing their peoples to be handed over to the Soviet Union against their will. According to the Soviet point of view, the legionnaires committed “high treason” even by being captured by the enemy.⁶⁶⁵ This was the same reasoning behind Stalin’s not signing of the Geneva Conventions, regulating the standards for treatment of the victims of the war.

From the Caucasian special purpose units, who were sent into an “impossible mission” to Chechnya, only its Captain Lange was known to be reached to the German frontline again after three months in the mountains. The Caucasian fighters of the German Army, the commandos, were good allies of the Nazis, but had no unquestionable loyalty to them. After the Caucasus was freed of Germans, the survivors of the Unternehmen Schamil fled to the mountains.

As stated above, towards the end of the war, most of the Turkestani and Caucasian Legions were transferred to the Western Front, where they had to engage with the Allied Forces. Until the end of the war, they fulfilled their duties. In France in June 1944 the Allies captured about thirty thousand legionnaires and volunteers after the D-Day landings from the Eastern Troops.⁶⁶⁶

The World War II ended with German defeat. The Yalta Conference, held in February 1945, foresaw the delivery of all the Soviet citizens to the Soviet Union.⁶⁶⁷ The 162nd Infantry Division, which surrendered in Rimini to the Italian partisan forces, at the Eastern coast of Northern Italy, was delivered to the British Armed Forces.⁶⁶⁸ The commander of the Division, Heygendorff requested from the British

⁶⁶⁵ Von zur Mühlen, p. 230.

⁶⁶⁶ Neulen, p. 331.

⁶⁶⁷ Von zur Mühlen, p. 230.

⁶⁶⁸ Littlejohn, p. 254.

authorities to treat his legionnaires as German soldiers and not to hand them over to the Soviet Union.⁶⁶⁹

According to Neulen, the total number of Turkestani casualties fighting on the side of Germans during the World War II had been around 67,000 men. From the members of the Caucasian peoples in the German Army, nearly 50,000 people were lost during the battles.⁶⁷⁰

The captured legionnaires in Italy were disarmed and interned by the Allies. They were gathered in Madena, Italy and were sorted by their nationalities in order to be handed over to the Soviet authorities in Tarent.⁶⁷¹ Thereupon, some of the legionnaires committed suicide and some tried to escape. A Mullah and some soldiers burnt themselves. During the transport in the trains, some soldiers jumped from the wagons. In Odessa, some of the Turkestani legionnaires jumped into the sea from the transport ships.⁶⁷²

A few legionnaires could find the chance to escape from being handed over to the Soviet Union. They managed to reside in Germany and in West Europe as émigrés by hiding or introducing themselves as members of different nations, i.e. Turkey. According to Patrick von zur Mühlen, about one thousand Turkestanis managed to escape from handovers. On the other hand, some decided to turn back to their homeland voluntarily.⁶⁷³ Most of the Soviet citizens were delivered to Soviet authorities in 1945. Though minor, some handovers also took place in 1946.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁹ Thorwald, *Wen Sie Verderben Wollen*, p. 573.

⁶⁷⁰ Neulen, p. 333.

⁶⁷¹ Von zur Mühlen, p. 230; Thorwald, *Wen Sie Verderben Wollen*, p. 574.

⁶⁷² Thorwald, *Wen Sie Verderben Wollen*, p. 574.

⁶⁷³ Von zur Mühlen, p. 231.

⁶⁷⁴ Von zur Mühlen, p. 232.

Ironically, the Turkestani representatives could only achieve their long-desired independent status towards the end of the war. On March 17, 1945, with an order of Berlin, the Georgian National Committee and the Crimean Tatar National Committee were recognized by the Ostministerium as the independent representatives of their peoples. On the same day, Hitler decided to give the Azerbaijani people “their independence.”⁶⁷⁵ A week later, the National Turkestan Union Committee was recognized as the “National Provisional Government” of Turkestan and the Turkestan Legion as the “National Army.”⁶⁷⁶ After nearly 70,000 Turkestanis were lost, it embraced about 110,000 Turkestanis, widespread in all fronts. Besides this, in April 1945, Kayyum Han met with four Turkestanis at the KONR and founded a “Turkestanische Rat (Turkestan Council)” there.⁶⁷⁷

Those former Soviet citizens, who did not escape to Turkey or to USA, remained in Germany. They were gathered in camps like Limburg or Mittenwald in Germany. Then, these émigrés were settled in Munich. They established religious organizations first, like *Islamische Rat für Deutschland* (Islamic Council for Germany) with Alimcan İdris, Abdurrahman Avtorhanov and Edige Kırimal at the head. In the years 1948-1950, the political bodies of the non-Russian former Soviet citizens began to appear. Along with the Russian and Ukrainian organizations, one Kalmuk, two Georgian, two Azerbaijani, two Armenian, two Turkestani, two Tatar-Bashkir and three North Caucasian councils were established.⁶⁷⁸

The councils could not unify and remained separated because of many reasons like political differences, competition between “old” and “new” émigrés,

⁶⁷⁵ Neulen, p. 333.

⁶⁷⁶ Neulen, p. 333.

⁶⁷⁷ Seidler, p. 280.

⁶⁷⁸ Von zur Mühlen, p. 232.

aims of political and financial supporters (USA and Britain).⁶⁷⁹ Veli Kayyum Han, who was arrested by the British after the war, re-established the *Milli Türkistan Birlik Komitesi* and published the *Milli Türkistan* again, even in many languages. The other political body of the Turkestanis, *Türkistan Milli Kurtuluş Komitesi* (Turkestan National Liberation Committee), was led by Haris Kanatbay.⁶⁸⁰ He remained as an opponent of Veli Kayyum Han and his Committee as well.⁶⁸¹

8.2 Conclusion

The Turkestani former Red Army Soldiers, who sided with Germans, passed through various stages during the World War II. In this regard, roughly four different stages could be distinguished. At the first stage, the Turkestanis were soldiers of Red Army fighting against Germany. With their equipment and training poorer than the soldiers of the Wehrmacht, they were aware that harshest punishments would be applied by the Soviet authorities on them, in case of being captured by the enemy. Turning back or escaping from the front was not easy. Thus, there was almost no possibility that they ever thought switching to German side and fighting against the Soviet Union, when they were under the ranks of the Red Army.

⁶⁷⁹ Von zur Mühlen, p. 232.

⁶⁸⁰ When Veli Kayyum Han established the National Turkestan Union Committee after the death of Mustafa Çokay, it included Uzbeks, Kazaks, Kirgizs POWs. After a while, factions occurred in the Committee based on ethnicities. Veli Kayyum Han, an Uzbek himself, brought Uzbeks to the important posts. Kirgizs and Kazaks wanted to establish their own commissions thereupon. Haris Kanatbay, a Kazakh, was the most active opponent of Veli Kayyum Han. There were other opponents of Kayyum Han, like Umari, who was the editor of the Journal *Türk Birliği*, Turkestan Edition. See, “Usbekischer Mitarbeiter für die türkestanische Zeitung des SS-Hauptamtes, Umari, Nachkam.” Berlin, November 21, 1944. NA, T-175/162/2695597 and NA, T-175/162/2695598. In 1944, after long discussions, Haris Kanatbay was chosen to the post of General Secretary. However, after a short while, in March-February 1945, he founded his own committee. See, Ömer Özcan, “Mustafa Çokay’olu Hakkında Bir Eser: Türkistan Ateşi” *Türk Yurdu* (Vol. 191, July 2003).

⁶⁸¹ Von zur Mühlen, p. 232.

Regardless of their political views on the Soviet government, the idea of “treason” was quite unthinkable.

At the second stage, the luckier ones were not killed by the German Army’s overwhelming attacks and fell into captivity. Despite millions of Soviet POWs, Stalin refused that the Red Army soldier could surrender to the enemy, instead of dying “heroically” in fight for the homeland. Thus, they could not receive any help, including from the international organizations and had to survive under the worst conditions like the Jews in the German concentration camps. After getting away from death, they had to suffer from diseases and hunger. Knowing that nobody would rescue them from these POW camps, they wanted to rescue themselves from captivity by working for Germans or “volunteering” in the local police forces. At this stage, it could not be claimed that the POWs were politically motivated and showed an open opposition to the Stalinist regime.

The third stage for the Turkestani former Red Army soldiers was the ending of their POW status and recruitment to the Turkestan Legion Battalions under German ranks. They dressed and armed like the German soldiers with their insignias on their shoulders, emphasizing on their religious and national feelings. Under the propaganda of Germans, they were presented as the opponents to the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. More religious freedom and a “united Turkestan” were promised to them, while the Stalinist regime was attacked severely. This was the stage when politics involved into the issue. Most of the Turkestanis justified their presence under German ranks with their “learned” opposition to the Stalinist regime. They learned it from the dense German propaganda at the legion barracks and the publications of the Turkestanis.

At the last (fourth) stage, Germans lost the war and most of the Turkestani former Red Army soldiers became POWs again, this time at the hands of the Allied Forces. They knew more or less the meaning of being handed over to the Soviet authorities. Again the lucky ones could escape from the POW camps to Germany, Turkey and the USA. They were the ones, who continued their opposition to the Soviet regime. Under relatively more favorable political atmosphere in these countries and with the financial support from the USA and the Great Britain, they established or joined political bodies based on Turkestani nationalism and opposition to the Soviet Union.

8.2.1 The Opposition of the Turkestanis and the USSR

The Soviet Union and its regime witnessed the greatest, mass and armed opposition in its history during the times of the World War II. This occurred at a time, when the strongest and the most authoritarian leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin was in power. The opposition of Turkestani peoples got a nationalist and separatist character, which was unthinkable to be permitted within the Soviet Union under the regime of Stalin.

The motivations of the Turkestanis for fighting or collaborating with the Germans during the World War II against the Soviet Union depended on various factors. Here, the motivations of different groups of Turkestanis should be distinguished. First of all, the collaboration of the émigrés from the Soviet Union and former Turkestani officers in the Red Army had, among others, a great deal of political character. The Turkestani émigré leader Mustafa Çokay, who opposed the Bolshevik regime and had to flee to Europe after the Bolshevik takeover, joined the

visits of the commissions to the POW camps.⁶⁸² He died after two visits to the camps and Veli Kayyum Han took over the leadership of the National Turkestan Union Committee. Though there is no evidence that Çokay had a tendency to collaborate closely with Germans. However, Kayyum Han was eager to work closely with them and rather motivated politically.

Along with the political motivations, Çokay, Kayyum Han and others pursued humanitarian aims. The very presence of the POW camps was an important factor in the whole story. In earlier days of the German-Soviet battles, they saw the inhumane situation in the POW camps while working in the above-mentioned commissions and endeavored to rescue as much Turkestanis and Muslims as possible from being killed by the SD units or dying of malnutrition, diseases, cold, etc. For this reason, they demanded from German authorities, with whom they were in contact, to end their POW status and use them as workers or security units, at least.

The majority of the former Red Army officers, who were captured by the Germans, also pursued political aims. It is important that there had been no documented incident, in which these officers switched to German side in the course of the battles between the Red Army and the Wehrmacht. Their collaboration with the Germans began after being POWs. The unfavorable conditions in the POW camps were also valid for them. Without doubt, this factor contributed to their decision to fight on the German side against the Soviet Union. But after being legionnaires or, as Germans classified them, “volunteers,” with the impact of

⁶⁸² Here, it should be remembered that Mustafa Çokay and Veli Kayyum Han were arrested by the German police and brought to Berlin. This meant that they did not voluntarily collaborate with the Germans.

German propaganda and Turkestani émigré leaders, they put nationalism and/or religious faiths on the first place.

It can also be added that the publications of the Turkestanis under the auspices of German authorities contributed to their understanding of nationalism. Instead of favoring separate states and nations in the Central Asia like the Bolshevik regime did, this kind of nationalism foresaw a unified Turkestan. Some German authorities took important steps to trigger a religious-nationalist uprising against the Soviet Regime, using the POWs and legionnaires. They established the Turkestan Legion, financed publications, contacted religious and nationalist leaders. Though it could be claimed that these actions taken by Germans had propaganda purposes, a point should not be neglected: all these efforts contributed to the Turkestan nationalism, at least among the émigré Turkestanis, to a significant degree to the disfavor of Stalinist policy of nationalities.

On the other side, though their numbers were small, there were also some Turkestani former Red Army officers affiliated with the Bolshevik ideology. Further, in the German POW camps, not only German propaganda prevailed. Though supervised closely by the Germans, Soviet propaganda could sometimes infiltrate into the camps and the headquarters of the legions. Also, Germans mostly did not regard the Turkestanis as their equal counterparts because of their racial attitude. Consequently, a number of Turkestani officers switched back to Soviet side. Again, political motivations contributed in their decisions, though in opposite way.

The former Red Army soldiers on the German side could be classified roughly in two groups: the first group would be the above-mentioned officers. There was an important detail about these people. As stated before, Stalin had

liquidated most of the officer cadres of the former Tsarist Army during the 1920s and formed Bolshevik Red Army soldiers just on the eve of the World War II. He needed newly graduated officers because of the German threat. The Turkestanis, who were studying at universities without military backgrounds conscripted into the Red Army before the war and rapidly graduated from the military schools in order to fulfill this need. Since the nationalist Turkestani intelligentsia had been wiped out by Stalin, these former Red Army officers, who got higher education, could be regarded as the most literate people among the Soviet POWs. Though they were educated according to the Bolshevik ideology and Stalinist nationalities policies in the Soviet Union, most of them were more prone to the idea of Turkestan nationalism under the influence of the wartime publications and German policies.

The second group of former Red Army soldiers would be those lower ranking privates, comprising the majority of the POWs and later legionnaires or “volunteers.” In the earlier days, they simply volunteered for working in the farms nearby, in the kitchens of the camps, etc. in order to rescue their lives. In some regions, some German commanders, on their own initiative, established small units from them for services like police, construction, driving, etc.

After the commissions were founded and began visiting the POW camps, the lower-ranking Turkestani former Red Army soldiers were recruited to the legions in various ways. Some of the POWs were selected to the legions by the members of the commissions. They would not have much chance to object this recruitment after witnessing all the murders and deaths in the POW camps at the earlier stages. A smaller number of the POWs were asked, on the other hand, whether or not they wanted to fight in the battles against the Soviet Union or preferred to work for Germans instead. There were only a few Turkestanis, who

were evaluated as “politically unreliable” by the commission members and continued their POW status. Germans did not leave anything to chance in this sensitive issue and, in theory, chose only the politically desirable POWs. Then, they indoctrinated them politically according to their ideology.

Bearing all these in mind, it can be said that politics or the idea of Turkestan nationalism played a partial role in the motivations of these latter group of POWs. Yet, it would not be totally incorrect to predict that this group was influenced by the publications of Turkestanis in the former group and speeches they listened in the legion barracks.

Obviously, it is impossible to know or predict each and every former Red Army soldiers’ motivation for siding with Germans in the battles against the Soviet Union. Yet, such a generalization is possible: among all the POWs, “survival” was the common and first ranking motivation for siding with the Germans. In the second place, there were, with their crucial importance, politics, religious beliefs, ideology and similar factors. These most important weaknesses of the Stalinist regime were used by the Germans considerably.

The purges by the Stalinist regime of the national intelligentsia of the Turkestani peoples, who favored an idea of a single united Turkestan, had many reflections on the decisions of Turkestani former Red Army soldiers to join the German ranks. First of all, it had negative effects on the development of the Turkestani nationalism with the “reign of terror” it created among the intelligentsia and the ordinary people as well. Secondly, the policy of supporting the nationalisms of Uzbeks, Kazaks, etc. against the “united single Turkestan” idea, seemed to be successful. Even under the harsh conditions of the World War II, the movements,

which led the opposition of the Central Asian peoples could not be integrated and divided as groups of Kazaks and Uzbeks.

It can be predicted that the ordinary Turkestanis, who were the unranked former Red Army soldiers, had less political intentions to oppose the Stalinist regime because of a fear created by the “reign of terror” mentioned above. Since they were mostly from the generation, which was educated at the Soviet schools and possibly witnessed the purges of national intelligentsia, their sense of Turkestan nationalism and opposition, if any, was removed by the educational and cultural policies of the regime. Stalin wiped out the political movements, which were matured in the Central Asia until the Bolshevik takeover in 1917 and after the end of the Civil War in Turkestan. Their leaders were liquidated.

Still, the harshest measures and pressure applied on the national movements and religious practices by the Stalinist regime should have created dissidence among all the Turkestanis, which justified their opposition. The members of the Turkestani intelligentsia at the front, at least, saw the chance of a kind of “revenge” from the regime with the help of Germans. They had done this, even though they saw that the Germans clearly humiliated them in any occasion.

8.2.1 The Recruitment of the Turkestanis and Germany

On the other side of the coin, there were Germany and the Nazi ideology. Hitler, the leader of the NSDAP or Nazi Party, was the “democratically” elected dictator of Germany. According to his point of view, German race was superior to other races. The Asiatic people ranked, along with the Jews, at the lowest rank of Nazi ideology’s “hierarchy of races.” Also, the non-German peoples should not be armed under any conditions.

According to the German constitution at that time, the officers in the Wehrmacht were forbidden to be members of political parties.⁶⁸³ In contrast with this, some high-ranking officers in the German Army were brought to their posts with the influence of the Nazi Party. Further, the Waffen-SS, an institution of the Party, became the de facto fourth force of the German Army and set under the responsibility of the OKW and the OKH. The foreign “volunteer” formations in the Waffen-SS began before the outbreak of the World War II and this established the main base for justification of the recruitment of the Turkestanis and other lower-ranking nationalities into the Waffen-SS ranks, under the difficult conditions of the war.

At such a time, when all the state apparatus was affiliated with politics in Germany, which was based on the superiority of the German race and humiliation of the others, and when the German Army kept on winning battles at the Eastern Front, it was remarkable that the German authorities permitted those “sub-humans” to join the Wehrmacht. Hitler had intentions to use the POWs as “forced labor” in the camps in Germany, but not as equal soldiers in the German Army. At the later days of the German attacks on the Soviet Union, the Turkestani POWs were made a subject of the realpolitik and a tool for propaganda in favor of Germans. An important reason for this was that the policy of Hitler “expand to the East” had no intentions to reach to the Central Asia, where the Turkestani peoples lived.

Though Germans did not regard the Eastern peoples in the army as equal counterparts and humiliated them on every occasion, some German authorities saw

⁶⁸³ On August 2, 1934, after the death of President Paul von Hindenburg, all officers and soldiers of the German Armed Forces swore an oath of loyalty to Hitler. It was short after that date, March 16, 1935, when the conscription law to the army decreed, which was an open flouting of the military restrictions of the Versailles Treaty. The law got the name Wehrmacht, like the new German Army did.

the bigger picture and took the initiative to use them for political and propaganda purposes rather than military ones at the earlier days of the World War II. One of the reasons behind the difference between the Nazi racist theory and practice was the disagreement on the Ostpolitik in the governmental cycles. German politicians and authorities like Rosenberg, Göbbels, Bräutigam were important people, who did not think ideologically and suggested a special treatment for the Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union.

The pre-war activities and serious studies of some German experts on the Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union also contributed to these efforts. Later, when the situation deteriorated for the German Army at the Eastern and Western Fronts, the use of the legionnaires and the “volunteers” became a pragmatic character, a necessity of the war conditions. The Turkestani and other legionnaires and the Waffen-SS formations began to be treated as equals by Germans towards the end of the war.

Germans did not pursue a policy, which would result with independent Turkestan in case of a total German victory. At the utmost, they should have foreseen a “Turkestani Republic” under German protectorate. The most obvious evidence for this was the hesitation of the German authorities to recognize the independent status of the National Turkestan Union Committee up until the very end of the war. However, the German propaganda, along with the nationalistic articles in the Turkestani publications created an atmosphere that Germans were perceived as “liberators.”

The role of Turkey and its relations with Germany and the Soviet Union in the process of the establishment and development of the Turkestani units and “volunteer” formations should not be undermined. First of all, at least the neutrality

of Turkey during the World War II was of crucial importance for Hitler. Thus, Germany paid attention not to damage good diplomatic relations with Turkey. Secondly, the visit of the Turkish Generals Erkilet and Erden to Germany and their meeting with Hitler had an important impact on the situation of the POWs at the hands of Germans, in favor of them.

Whether or not the status of the Turkestani POWs at the hands of the Germans, and later on, their collaboration with the Germans against the USSR contributed to the idea of Turkestani nationalism in the Soviet Central Asia remained a doubtful issue. The Soviet citizens, handed over by the Allies to the Soviet authorities were accused of “high treason” and severely punished. They were either sent to exile or executed. Even after the independence of the Central Asian republics, the four years of the captured Red Army soldiers (1941-1945) were omitted in the official history books of these republics. Also, as Von zur Mühlen puts, the victory of the Soviet Union became the “defeat of the all separatist movements.”⁶⁸⁴ The national oppositions of the non-Russians to the Bolshevik regime were in serious disappointment after the war. On the contrary, the World War II, as named by the Soviet historians *Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voina* (Great Patriotic War), had contributions to the “union” of the peoples of the USSR, with the support of the Soviet propaganda and nationalities policies and the more strengthened Stalinist regime.⁶⁸⁵

On the other hand, this phenomenon became an important item on the agenda of the Turkestanis in the emigration, especially for those in Turkey, USA and Germany. The people, who survived the catastrophic years of the World War II,

⁶⁸⁴ Von zur Mühlen, p. 238.

⁶⁸⁵ Von zur Mühlen, p. 238.

inhumane conditions of the German POW camps and finally the end of the war, wrote their memoirs to be recorded by history.

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Interview with an Uzbek from Ferghana Valley.
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Interview with an Azerbaijani from Baku.
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Interview with a Crimean Tatar.
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Interview with a Kalmuk.
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Interview with a Soviet peasant.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: The Strength of the Waffen-SS at the Beginning of the Operation Barbarossa

The strength of the Waffen-SS at the beginning of the Operation Barbarossa:⁶⁸⁶

SS Division Leibstandarte SS “Adolf Hitler”	10,796
SS Division “Viking”	19,377
SS Totenkopf Division	18,754
SS Division “Nord”	10,573
SS Division “Reich”	19,021
SS Polizei Division	17,347
Kommandostab Reichsführer SS	18,438
Administrative Department	4,007
Reserve Units	29,809
Inspectorate of Concentration Camps	7,200
SS Guard Battalions	2,159
SS Garrison Posts	992
SS Officer and NCO Schools	1,028
SS Volunteer Battalion “Nordost”	904

Appendix II: The Anthem of National Turkestan Union Committee

GÖZEL TÜRKİSTAN⁶⁸⁷

*Gözel Türkistan senge ne boldi,
Sebeb vaqtsız güllerin soldi,
Ej güllerin soldi.
Cemenler berbad, quşlar hem ferjad,
Hemmesi mezlüm, bolmasmidir şad,
Ej bolmasmidir şad.
Bilmen ne üçün quşlar ucmaş baqçalarında,
Ej baqçalarında.
Bilmen ne üçün quşlar ucmaş baqçalarında,
Ej baqçalarında.
Birliğimizin tebrenmes taqi,
Umidimizin sonmas ciraqi,
Ej sonmas ciraqi.
Birleş ey xalqım kelgandır caqi,*

⁶⁸⁶ Report by *Inspekteur für Statistik* to *Reichsführer SS*, “Stärkemeldung der Schutzstaffel vom 30 Juni 1941,” August 27, 1941, quoted in Stein, p. 120.

⁶⁸⁷ Adopted version of *Gözel Fergana* poem by Turkestani Çolpan. See İkrām Han, pp. 133-134.

Bezelsin *endi Türkistan baqi*,
Ej *Türkistan baqi*.
Qozqal *xalqım jeter şunça çebru-çafalar*,
Ej *çebru-çafalar*.
Qozqal *xalqım jeter şunça çebru-çafalar*,
Ej *çebru-çafalar*.
Al *bajraqinni qalbim ojqansin*,
Qulliq *esaret barcası jansin*,
Qur *jeni devlet javlar örtensin*,
Ösib *Türkistan qaddin kötersin*,
Ej *qaddin kötersin!*
Jajrab, *jaşnab öz vetenin gül baqları da*,
Ej *gül baqları da*.
Jajrab, *jaşnab öz vetenin gül baqları da*,
Ej *gül baqları da*.

Appendix III: Oath of the Legionnaires in the German Army

Oath of the foreign legionnaires:⁶⁸⁸

Ich schwöre bei Gott diesen heiligen Eid, dass ich im Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus dem Obersten Befehlshaber der deutschen Wehrmacht, Adolf Hitler, unbedingten Gehorsam leisten und als tapferer Soldat bereit sein will, jederzeit für diesen Eid mein Leben einzusetzen.

(I swear by God, this sacred oath, that in the struggle against Bolshevism, I will unconditionally obey the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Adolf Hitler, and as a faithful soldier am ready, at any time he may desire, to lay down my life for this oath.)

⁶⁸⁸ Original German and its English translation, see Williamson, p. 59.

Appendix IV: Commanders of the Turkestani Units

The commanders and strength of the Turkestani or Muslim units in the Waffen-SS were as follows:⁶⁸⁹

<u>Title of the Commander</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
SS-Obersturmbannführer	Andreas Mayer-Mader	January 1944
SS- Hauptsturmführer	Billig	March 28, 1944
SS-Hauptsturmführer	Hermann ⁶⁹⁰	April 27, 1944
SS-Sturmbannführer der Reserve	Franz Liebermann ⁶⁹¹	June 1944
SS-Hauptsturmführer	Reiner Olzscha ⁶⁹²	September 1944
SS-Standartenführer	Harun – el – Raschid	October 1944
SS-Hauptsturmführer	Fürst	January 1945
<u>Unit strength</u>		
February 1944	3,000	
September 1944	4,000	
April 1945	8,500	

Appendix V: Number of the Eastern Volunteers in the German Army

Number of Eastern “volunteers” as of October 1944:⁶⁹³

Armed Lithuanian Units	27,000
Armed Latvian Units	2 SS Divisions
Armed Estonian Units	1 SS Division
Turkestani Volunteers	110,000
Tatar Volunteers	35,000
Cossack Units	82,000
Caucasians	
(Armenian, Azeri, Georgian, North Caucasus)	110,000
Kalmuk Cavalry Corps	29 Squadrons
Byelorussian Military Units	1 SS Division
Ukrainian Military Units	220,000

⁶⁸⁹ From Bishop, p. 180 and Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 81.

⁶⁹⁰ After the death of Hermann in a battle near Grodno [in the westernmost region of today’s Belarus] the Eastern Muslim Waffen-SS Regiment was headed by an Uzbek, SS-Obersturmführer (Lieutenant) Gulam Alimov. The Regiment was attached to SS-Oberführer (Brigadier) Dirlewanger’s SS Brigade. Romanko, “The East Came West: Muslim and Hindu Volunteers in German Service, 1941-1945,” p. 81.

⁶⁹¹ In 1944 until June, there was an uncertainty about the commanding post of the Turkestani or Muslim units in the Waffen-SS. The unit was attached to SS-Dirlewanger Penal Brigade to suppress the uprising in Warsaw. Thus, Dirlewanger should be assumed as the commander of these units until July 1944, when Harun - el - Raschid was brought to the post. Muñoz, *Hitler’s Muslims*, p. 78.

⁶⁹² When Harun - el - Raschid became the commander of the Ostmuselmanische SS-Regiment in July 1944, he was SS-Sturmbannführer (SS-Major), while Olzscha was SS-Hauptsturmführer (SS-Captain). Harun - el - Raschid was ranking lower than Olzscha, until he was promoted to SS-Standartenführer (SS-Colonel) in October 1944. Muñoz, *Hitler’s Muslims*, p. 78.

⁶⁹³ A document dated January 24, 1945, from the Ministry for the Eastern Occupied Territories. Muñoz, *Hitler’s Eastern Legions*, p. 5.

Military and semi-military formations served in the German Army and Waffen-SS until January 24, 1945:⁶⁹⁴

Armed Lithuanian Units	36,800
Armed Latvian Units	104,000
Armed Estonian Units	10,000
Estimated Reserves of Turks and Idel-Ural Tatars	45,000 (incl. 20,000 POWs)
SS- <i>Waffengruppe</i> “ <i>Krim</i> ” ⁶⁹⁵	10,000
Armed Armenian Units	7,000
Armed Azerbaijani Units	31,000
Armed Georgian Units	19,000
Kalmuk Cavalry Corps	5,000
Armed North Caucasian Units	7,000
Russian Military Units	10,000
Byelorussian Military Units	19,000
Ukrainian Military Units	75,000
Total Eastern Volunteers	
(in the Army, Waffen-SS, Luftwaffe, Police)	373,800
Russian Liberation Army of Vlasov	300,000

Appendix VI: Commanders of the Caucasian Waffen-SS Brigade

Commanding cadre and organization of the Caucasian Armed SS Brigade (Kaukasischer Waffen Verband der SS) was as follows:⁶⁹⁶

- *Standartenführer der Reserve* (Colonel of the Reserve Army): Arved Theuermann
- *Obersturmbannführer* (Lieutenant Colonel): Hubert Ritter von Aichinger
- *Hauptsturmführer der Reserve* (Captain of the Reserve Army): Emanuel von Jaskiewicz
- *SS Waffengruppe “Armenien”* (Armed SS Group Armenia): Waffen-SS Colonel V. Sarkisjan
- *SS Waffengruppe “Aserbeidschan”* (Armed SS Group Azerbaijan): Waffen-SS Colonel Muhammed İsrail Bey
- *SS Waffengruppe “Georgien”* (Armed SS Group Georgia): Waffen-SS Colonel Pridon Zulukidze
- *SS Waffengruppe “Nordkaukasien”* (Armed SS Group North Caucasus): Waffen-SS Colonel Ulagay Küçük.

Other officers in the unit were: Waffen-SS Captain Akaki Barkalaja; Waffen-SS Lieutenants Abdul Ebubekirov, Misost Dzhido, Ramazan Duyakulov, Chaibulla

⁶⁹⁴ A document dated January 24, 1945, from the Ministry for the Eastern Occupied Territories. Muñoz, *Hitler’s Eastern Legions*, p. 5.

⁶⁹⁵ This unit was first in the *Osttürkischer-Waffenverband der SS*, then in the *Kaukasischer-Waffenverband der SS*.

⁶⁹⁶ Muñoz, *Hitler’s Muslims*, pp. 67-68

Magomayev, Anatolie Schakmann, Tscherim Soobzokov, Magomed Uschano; Waffen-SS Second Lieutenants Ahmed Diakyev, İsmail Dscharimov, Georg Kordsachia, Harun-Reşit Magomayev.

Appendix VII: Turkestani Workers of Publication

List of the Muslim authors and workers in the Journal *Türk Birliği* (Union of Turks) in Germany during the World War II:⁶⁹⁷

<u>Name</u>	<u>Job</u>
Hakim Tımbek	Redactor
Cingis Amitov	Secretary
Aman Annayar	Worker
Alsa Musuralen	Corrector
Tulep Canisak	Translator

Idel-Ural edition:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Job</u>
Şihap Nigmati	Chief Redactor
Minigul Garipov	Typist
Bari Fatçullin	Translator
Konstantin Çartşenko	Worker
Asfald Şınbayev	Corrector
Fatih Azizbayev	Worker

Krim (Crimea) edition:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Job</u>
Abdullah Karabaş	Chief Redactor
Suleyman Mangıtlı	Literature Worker
Osman Saitov	Responsible Secretary
Talib Seyitaliyev	Worker
Ahmet Mefayev	Journalist
Edhem Hatip-Zade	Corrector
Zehra Karabaş	Typist

⁶⁹⁷ NA, T-354/161/3807063; T-354/161/3807064; T-354/161/3807065; T-354/161/3807066. According to the report of Deutscher Verlag (German Publishing), in October, November and December 1944, half of the publishing costs belonged to the Turkic-Newspapers. See, NA, T-175/162/ 2695541 and NA, T-175/162/ 2695541. NA, T-354/161/3807063; T-354/161/3807064; T-354/161/3807065; T-354/161/3807066.

Türkistan edition:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Job</u>
Makam Umari	-
Kurre Bedrimurat	Writer
Gabdil Kuvandikov	Translator
Aziz Abişov	Last Redactor

Appendix VIII: A List of some of the Turkestani Officers

A list of the some of the Turkestani officers in German POW camps in the World War II:⁶⁹⁸

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Address</u>
Aliev Batir	Oberstleutnant (Lieu.Col.)	Stalag IX, Badorf
M. Ahmedşamov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund
Kasi Kasbekov	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund
E. Muhammedcanov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund
T. Tilebaldinov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund
A. Şuturli	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund
J. Usmanov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund
K. Eyüpov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Stalag VI, Dortmund

A list of the some of the Turkestani soldiers and NCOs in the German Army in the World War II:⁶⁹⁹

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Address</u>
Oras Taşov	Doctor	Ausbildungslager Z.B.W
Saken Abişev	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Berlin, Neuköln
T. Toktanazarov	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Türkleitstelle, Berlin
Ashum Sakkalov	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Neuhammer, Türklegion
Anuer Suiendikow	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Feldpost
Anoyev	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Feldpost
Ahmedov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Feldpost
Sarıbay Arıkov	Leutnant (Second Lieu.)	Feldpost
K. Ütgenov	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Feldpost

⁶⁹⁸ NA, T-354/161/3807060. Original handwriting. Writer and date unknown.

⁶⁹⁹ NA, T-354/161/3807060. Original handwriting. Writer and date unknown.

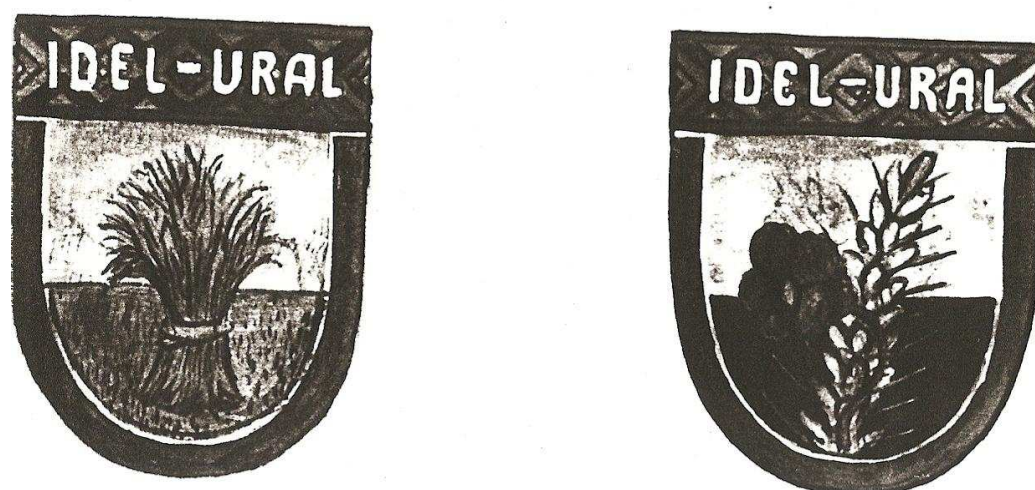
A list of the some of the Turkestani civilians working with Germans in the World War II:⁷⁰⁰

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Address</u>
Dshumabek Akbergenov	Hauptmann (Captain)	Türkleitstelle
Ergali Düşündübayev	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Türkleitstelle
Bilmenov	Oberleutnant (First Lieu.)	Türkleitstelle

Appendix IX: Drawings of Insignias for the Legions

Some of the preliminary sketches found in the German archives for the badges and flags of Turkestani and Muslim units. The drawer is unknown.⁷⁰¹

Drawing 1

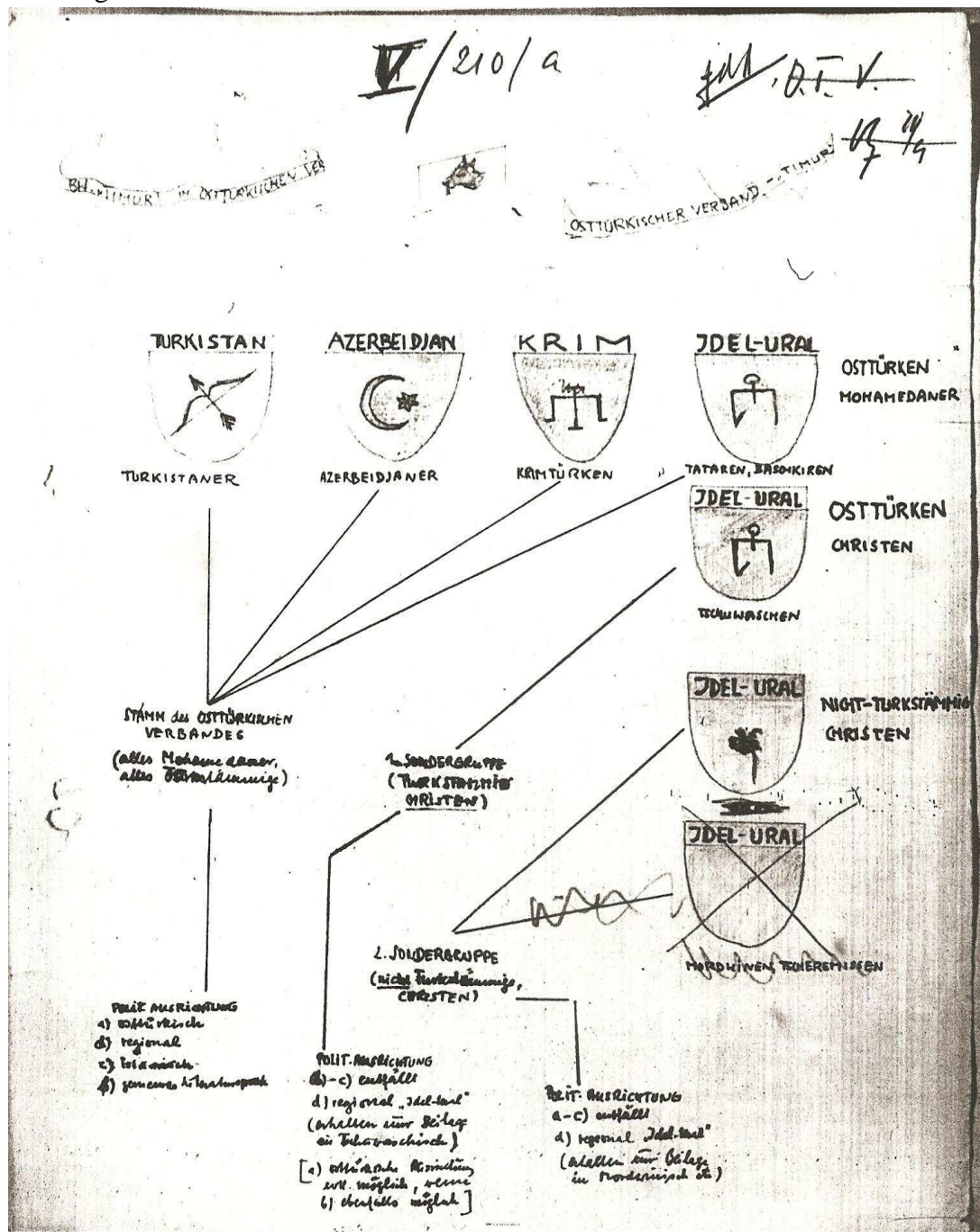


In the Drawing 2, the drawer divided his figures into three: The first four drawings on the top were classified as *Stamm des Osttürkischen Verbände* (alles *Mohamedaner*, alles *Türkstämmige*) (Cadre of the Eastern Turkic Regiments (all Muslim, all Turkic-origin)). Under these drawings it is read “Turkistaner, Azerbeidjaner, Krimtürken, Tataren-Baschkiren” (from left to right, respectively). The second-from-the-top drawing on the right-hand side of the page was classified as *1. Sondertruppe (Türkstämmige Christen)* (First Special troops (Turkic-origin Christians). Under this drawing it is read “Tschuwaschen (Chuvashs).” The last drawing was for the non-Turkic origin Christians, classified as *2. Sondertruppe (nicht Türkstämmige, Christen)* (Second Special Troops (non-Turkic-origin, Christians).

⁷⁰⁰ NA, T-354/161/3807060. Original handwriting. Writer and date unknown.

⁷⁰¹ These drawings are copies of NA, T-175/162/2695369; NA, T-175/162/2695249; NA, T-175/162/2695393, and NA, T-354/161/3807078, respectively.

Drawing 2



In the Drawing 3, there are preliminary sketches for badges and flags of Turkestani and Bashkir troops in the Waffen-SS. The SS insignia can be seen on the badge-drawings. Thus, these drawings should be dated after the establishment of the *Osttürkisches Waffenverband der SS* (Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Regiments), namely after October, 1944.

In the first drawing on the top it is read: "*Türk einig, Türk frei, Türk groß* (Turk united, Turk free, Turk great)." On the bottom, it is read: "*Türkistan*" and "*Alla biz bilen* (God with us)." In the second drawing, on the top it is read: "*Osttürkisches Korps* (Eastern Turkic Corps), while on the bottom: "*Baschkirten* (Bashkirs)" and "*Alla biz bilen* (God with us)."

Drawing 3



Drawing 4



The Drawing 4 was another preliminary sketch found in the German archives. The drawer is unknown. However, it is clear that this drawing of a flag was planned by the drawer to be a part of the wartime German propaganda. It is emphasizing the unification of the Muslims of the world, making most probably a reference to the famous slogan of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) "Workers of the world, unite!" At the bottom of the flag wrote: "Muslims of the world, unite!"

Appendix X: A List of some of the Turkic Officers in the Waffen-SS

List of the classified Muslim and Turkic officers in the Waffen-SS in the document dated January 25, 1945:⁷⁰²

1. Turkestanis:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Classified as SS-</u>	<u>Date</u>
Açmusa Kuvatov	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	22.01.45
Kurre Berdimurat	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	22.01.45
Seit-Umer Çorman	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	19.01.45
Adil Muhtar	Führer (?)	19.01.45
Arsibay Cumabayev	Sturmbannführer (Major)	09.01.45
Alaş Musuralin	Oberscharführer (Sergeant 1 st Class)	09.01.45
Ergali Düşündübayev	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	14.12.44
Cumabek Ahbergenov	Hauptsturmführer (Captain)	14.12.44
Jakow Delmanow	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	19.12.44
Galimcan Sarsengaliyev	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	19.12.44
Şaviole Kabducun	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	19.12.44

2. Volga Tatar:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Classified as SS-</u>	<u>Date</u>
Akim Tagirov	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	?

3. Crimean Tatars:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Classified as SS-</u>	<u>Date</u>
Ahmet Nuretdinov	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	16.01.45
Salih Şamsutdinov	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	16.01.45
Enver Yerfanov	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	16.01.45
Ahmet Şayhutdinov	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	16.01.45
Vassiliy Antonov	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	16.01.45
Ahmat Galin	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	16.01.45
Gilmat Husnutdinov	Standarten-Oberjunker (-)	16.01.45
Herman Düşugunsov	Standarten-Oberjunker (-)	16.01.45
Grigori Şurkin	Standarten-Oberjunker (-)	16.01.45
Imam Şerafetdinov	Oberscharführer (Sergeant 1 st Class)	16.01.45
Bekir Adamoviç	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	04.01.45
Sekirja Arabskij	(?)	04.01.45
Kemal Ortaylı	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	14.12.44

⁷⁰² Names as written in the original document. See, NA, T-175/162/2695420; NA, T-175/162/2695419.

Abdullah Karabaş	Hauptsturmführer (Captain)	14.12.44
Suleiman Mangıtlı	Oberscharführer (Sergeant 1 st Class)	14.12.44
Şihab Nigmati	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	14.12.44
Bari Façulin	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	14.12.44
Cingis Amitov	Untersturmführer (2 nd Lieu.)	14.12.44
Eskender Dairski	Obersturmführer (1 st Lieu.)	14.12.44
Gaisa Kateyev	Hauptsturmführer (Captain)	(?)

4. North Caucasian:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Classified as SS-</u>	<u>Date</u>
Bidanorov Şamil	(?)	(?)

Appendix XI: A List of some of the Battalions of Eastern Legions

Infantry Battalions of the Eastern Legions in the Caucasus in years 1942-1943:⁷⁰³

Battalion	Commander(s)	Strength	Higher Command	Area of Operations
450th Turkestani	Major Mayer-Mader; Major Bergen; Captain Kob	934 Turkestanis 27 Germans	16 th Motorized Div., 4 th Panzer Army of Army Group B. Later: 3 rd Panzer Corps, 1 st Panzer Army of Army Group A.	On Astrakhan direction (Kalmuk Steppe)
782nd Turkestani	1 st Lieu. (later Captain) Heise	900 Turkestanis 20 Germans	16 th Motorized Division	On Astrakhan direction (Kalmuk Steppe)
811th Turkestani ⁷⁰⁴	Major Kurth	820 Turkestanis 30 Germans	16 th Motorized Division	On Astrakhan direction (Kalmuk Steppe)
452nd Turkestani	Captain Baumann	938 Turkestanis 12 Germans	97 th Hunter Division, 44 th Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Tuapse
781st Turkestani	Captain Niegsch	902 Turkestanis 28 Germans	101 st Hunter Division, 44 th Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Tuapse
I/370th Turkestani	First Lieu. Richter	928 Turkestanis 41 Germans	370 th Infantry Division, 52 nd Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok
801st North Caucasian	Captain Everling, later: Captain Burkhardt	920 N.Caucasians 27 Germans	370 th Infantry Division, 52 nd Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok
802nd North Caucasian	Captain Cap	900 N.Caucasians 37 Germans	370 th Infantry Division (later: 3 rd Panzer Div.), 40 th Panzer Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok

⁷⁰³ From Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Oberkommando der 17. Armee, Oberkommando der 1. Panzerarmee. See, Muñoz (ed.), *The East Came West*, p. 306.

⁷⁰⁴ On October 1942, this unit was named as 444th Turkestani Infantry Battalion and attached to the 444th German Security Division.

800th North Caucasian	First Lieu. Kurpanek	900 N.Caucasians 40 Germans	125 th Infantry Division, 5 th Army Corps, 17 th Panzer Army	Tuapse
804th Azerbaijani “Aslan”⁷⁰⁵	Major Gloger	963 Azerbaijanis 40 Germans	4 th Mountain Division, 49 th Mountain Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	On Sukhumi direction
805th Azerbaijani	Captain Hoch	919 Azerbaijanis 37 Germans	111 th Infantry Division, 52 nd Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok
I/111th Azerbaijani “Dönmeç”	Captain Scharrenberg	929 Azerbaijanis 33 Germans	111 th Infantry Division, 52 nd Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok
806th Azerbaijani	Captain Ottendorf	911 Azerbaijanis 44 Germans	50 th Infantry Division, 52 nd Army Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok
I/73th Azerbaijani	Captain Franke	917 Azerbaijanis 42 Germans	73 rd Infantry Division, 5 th Army Corps, 17 th Army	Anapa and Novorossiysk
795th Georgian	First Lieu. Schirr	934 Georgians 41 Germans	23 rd Infantry Division, 3 rd Panzer Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok
796th Georgian	Captain Eismann	912 Georgians 37 Germans	1 st Mountain Division, 49 th Panzer Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Tuapse
I/9th Georgian	First Lieu. Strack	927 Georgians 38 Germans	9 th Infantry Division, 5 th Army Corps, 17 th Army	Anapa and Novorossiysk
II/4th Georgian	Captain Bartscht	929 Georgians and Ossetians 36 Germans	4 th Mountain Division, 49 th Mountain Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Temryuk and Anapa
808th Armenian	Major Kucera	916 Armenians 41 Germans	1 st Mountain Division, 49 th Panzer Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Tuapse
809th Armenian	Captain Becker	913 Armenians 45 Germans	13 th Panzer Division, 3 rd Panzer Corps, 1 st Panzer Army	Nalchik and Mozdok

⁷⁰⁵ By the summer of 1943, this became a part of 314th Azerbaijani Infantry Regiment of the 162nd Infantry Division.

Maps

Map 1: Legions in the Ukraine and Caucasus

List and map of the Eastern Legions and the Cossack units in the Ukraine and Caucasus (November-December 1942):⁷⁰⁶

- 450, 452, 782, 811, I/370 : Turkestani Battalions,
- 795, 796, I/9, II/4 : Georgian Battalions,
- 808, 809 : Armenian Battalions,
- 804, 806, I/73, I/111 : Azerbaijani Battalions,
- 800, 802: North Caucasian Battalions,
- I/444, II/444, I/454, II/454 : Cossack Divisions (444th and 454th security divisions),
- Kaz./97 : 97th Cossack Division,
- I/82, II/82 : Cossack Squadrons of 40th Panzer Corps,
- Pl., Jung., I/Don., I/Moun., I/Kub., I/Volga. : Cossack Cavalry Regiment “Plateau”, Cossack Regiment of Jung Schultz, 1st Don, 1st Kuban, 1st Mountaineer, 1st Volga Tatar Units,
- Berg. : Sonderverband Bergmann,
- 156, 945 : Turkestani Construction Battalions,
- Lf. : Caucasian Field Battalion of Luftwaffe.

⁷⁰⁶ Droblyazko and Karaschuk, p. 10; Muñoz (ed.), *The East Came West*, p. 306.



Map 2: German POW Camps in the Ukraine and Crimea Mentioned in the Text



Map 3: German POW Camps in Poland Mentioned in the Text



Map 4: German Administration and Planned boundaries of the Eastern Territories⁷⁰⁷



⁷⁰⁷ Dallin, p. 90.

Map 5: Eastern Legions and Volunteer Formations in France (May-June 1944)



- 781, 787 : Turkestani Battalions,
- 795, 797, 798, 799, 822, 823, I/9, II/4 : Georgian Battalions,
- 808, 809, 812, 813, I/125, I/198, II/9 : Armenian Battalions,
- 807 : Azerbaijani Battalion,
- 800, 803 : North Caucasian Battalions,
- 826, 827, 829 : Volga Tatar Battalions,
- 403, 454, 570, 622, 623, 624, 625 : Cossack Battalions,
- 1, 2, 5 : self defense volunteer divisions (Schutzmannschaften).

Pictures and Illustrations

Picture 1: A Volga Tatar in the German Army

Year: 1942-1944.⁷⁰⁸



⁷⁰⁸ Bild 146-2008-0337, Bundesarchiv, Bundesarchiv Picture Database. See, <http://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de>, accessed on June 15, 2010.

Picture 2: Turkestanis in the German Army in Tionville

North of France, 1943.⁷⁰⁹



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1560-21
Foto: Müller, Karl | 1943

Picture 3: Turkestanis in the German Army in Tionville

North of France, 1943.⁷¹⁰



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1560-22
Foto: Müller, Karl | 1943

⁷⁰⁹ Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1560-21.

⁷¹⁰ Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1560-22.

Picture 4: Turkestanis in the German Army in Tionville
North of France, 1943.⁷¹¹



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1560-02A
Foto: Müller, Karl | 1943 Oktober - November

Picture 5: Turkestanis in the German Army in Normandy, France, 1943⁷¹²



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1561-04
Foto: Müller, Karl | 1943 Oktober - November

⁷¹¹ Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1560-02A.

⁷¹² Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1561-04.

Picture 6: Turkestanis in the German Army in Normandy, France, 1943⁷¹³



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1561-09
Foto: Müller, Karl | 1943 Oktober - November

Picture 7: Turkestanis in the German Army, October-November 1943⁷¹⁴



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1558-36A
Foto: Müller, Karl | 1943 Oktober - November

⁷¹³ Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1561-09.

⁷¹⁴ Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-295-1558-36A.

Picture 8: Turkestani Officers with German Commanders

Barneville, France, on the Atlantic coast, January 16, 1944. From right to left in the picture are: Oberstleutnant von Tempelhoff, Oberstleutnant Rueissner, Generalmajor Zeltmann, Rommel, on the left is an officer of 698th Turkestani Bataillon.⁷¹⁵



Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-296-1982-04A.
Foto: Müller | 16. Januar 1944

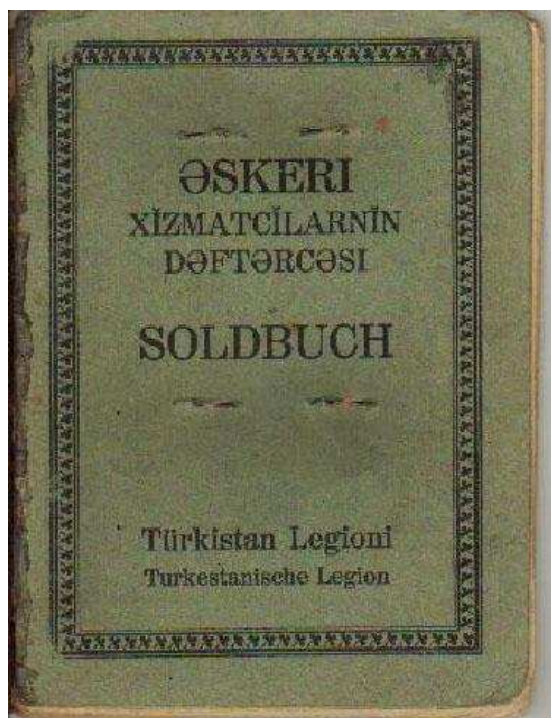
Picture 9: Turkish Generals Erkilet and Erden with Hitler⁷¹⁶



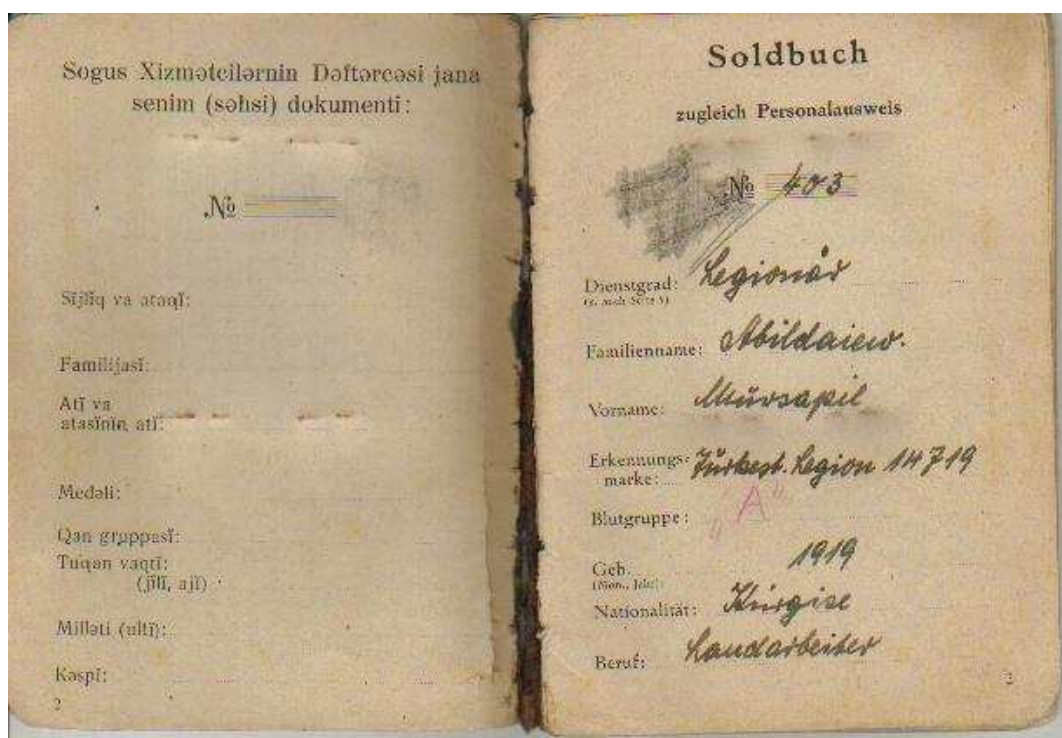
⁷¹⁵ Bundesarchiv, Bild 1011-296-1982-04A.

⁷¹⁶ See, <http://forum.axishistory.com>, accessed on January 15, 2010.

Picture 10: Soldbuch of a Kirgiz Legionnaire from the 719th Turkestani Battalion⁷¹⁷



⁷¹⁷ See, <http://www.turan.info/forum>, accessed on January 15, 2010.




Picture 11: Soldbuch of an Azerbaijani Legionnaire Named Agabala Agabalayev⁷¹⁸



⁷¹⁸ See, <http://www.turan.info/forum>, accessed on January 15, 2010.

This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some faint smudges and discoloration, particularly towards the top right corner. The left edge of the page shows the binding structure, including what appears to be a metal clip or staple used to hold the page in place. The overall tone is a warm, off-white or light beige.

14


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 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

15

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22

1. Dom bis nach
 Grund:
 den
 (Steuerfrei bei Rump-, Kruppenföhrst etc.)

2. Dom bis nach
 Grund:
 den
 (Steuerfrei bei Rump-, Kruppenföhrst etc.)

3. Dom bis nach
 Grund:
 den
 (Steuerfrei bei Rump-, Kruppenföhrst etc.)

4. Dom bis nach
 Grund:
 den
 (Steuerfrei bei Rump-, Kruppenföhrst etc.)

23

Picture 12: A Turkestani NCO in the German Army⁷¹⁹



⁷¹⁹ See, Littlejohn for the picture.

Picture 13: Insignias of the Turkistan Legion⁷²⁰

- (i) The first design in 1942. 100 x 68 mm. Dome of the mosque blue and white, background color of the mosque dark green, Turkistan script blue.
- (ii) The second design in 1943. Arrow and bow white, background pink (top) and blue (bottom), Turkistan script blue.
- (iii) The third design in 1944. 80 x 60 mm. Dome of the mosque blue and white, background color of the mosque dark green, Turkistan script blue.



(i)



(ii)



(iii)

⁷²⁰ See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

Picture 14: Insignias of the Azerbaijani Legion⁷²¹

- (i) The version used in 1942-1943.
- (ii) The version used in 1943-1945.



Picture 15: Insignias of the Caucasian Legion (first and second designs)⁷²²



⁷²¹ See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

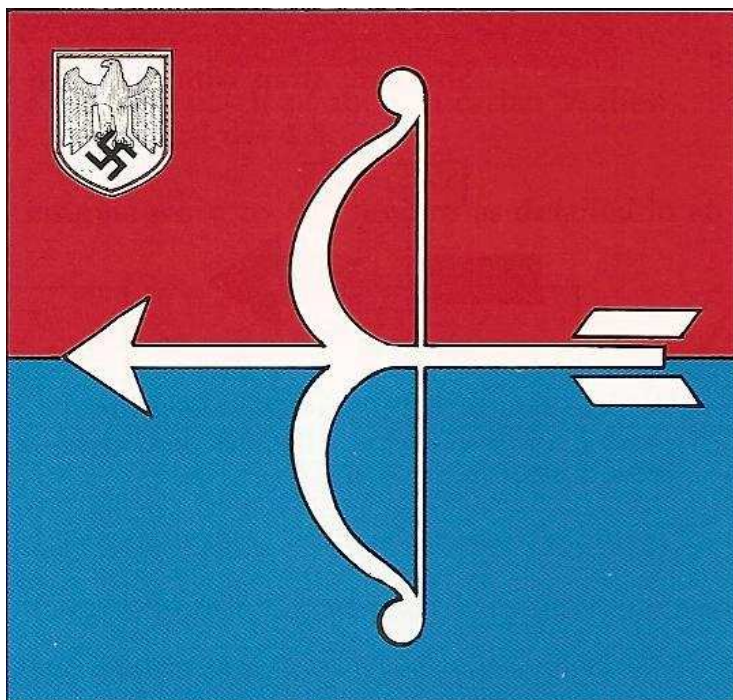
⁷²² See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

Picture 16: Insignias of the Volga Tatar Legion (first, second and third designs)⁷²³



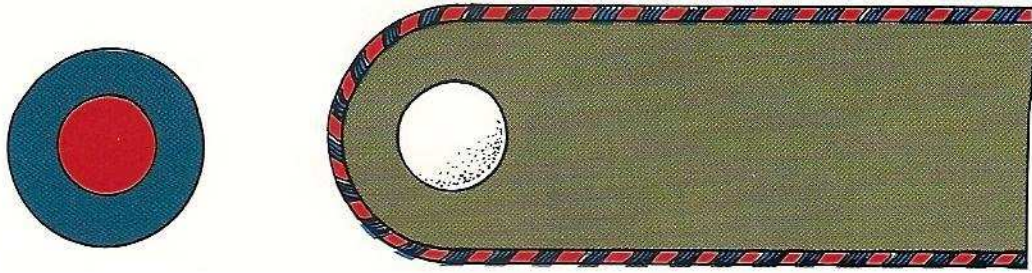
⁷²³ See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

Picture 17: Flag of the Turkestan Legion (first version bottom, second version above)⁷²⁴

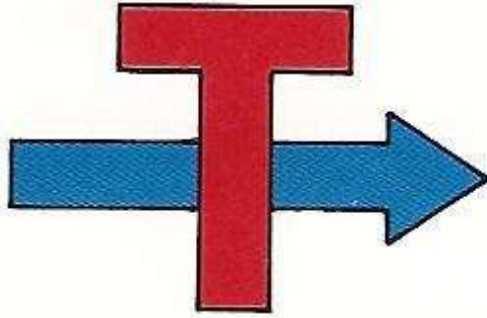


⁷²⁴ See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

Picture 18: Cap Cockade and Shoulder Strap of the Turkestan Legion⁷²⁵



The vehicle sign of the 162nd Infantry Division.



Picture 19: Collar Patch and cuff Title of the Eastern Turkic Waffen-SS Division⁷²⁶



⁷²⁵ See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

⁷²⁶ See, Littlejohn for the pictures.

Picture 19: Veli Kayyum Han in 1942⁷²⁷



⁷²⁷ See, Andican, *Hariçte Türkistan Mücadelesi*, p. 528.